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Reconceptualising Internal Marketing: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

D.M.Brown

PhD

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Reconceptualising Internal Marketing: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

David M. Brown

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of the University of
Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in Newcastle
Business School

April, 2017

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others. Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the University Ethics Committee on 10.01.2014. The total word count is 83,217.

Name: David Brown

Signature:

Date: Tuesday, 4th April, 2017

Abstract

This thesis reconceptualises Internal Marketing (IM) through multi-stakeholder perspectives, by exploring the experiences and opinions of those directly affected by IM, whether as policy-makers, implementers and transmitters, managers or 'recipient' staff. By recruiting participants from many industries and levels of seniority, it complements the predominantly organisation-level, top-down perspectives within extant IM literature, emancipating the voices of previously underrepresented actors.

The study is intended to address recent calls for exploration of dyadic perspectives within IM research (Yang & Coates, 2010), and assess the applicability of key concepts from Channel Management (CM) literature, transposing them from the supply chain into an internal market context. It therefore explores the tacit, informal, unplanned, undocumented and often interpersonal transactions through which IM takes place, and may be considered relativistic, phenomenological and postmodernist in its concerns. An emergent concept is the phenomenon of Internal Demarketing (ID), in which accepted marketing strategies and techniques applied to the internal market reduce the attractiveness of the organisation to some or all staff. It is proposed that this may occur as an intentional, covert strategy, possibly with sub-strategies tailored to different organisational objectives and employee segments. These are taxonomized here.

This qualitative thesis makes a methodological contribution by introducing a new form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in which participants prepare for interview by reflecting upon their own online and digital communications about the research topic, using that reflexivity to steer interviews and corroborate or challenge and amend the researcher's subsequent analysis of those interviews.

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Chapter 1) Introduction

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This chapter introduces the research focus, aims and objectives, key concepts informing the research, its scope and its structure.

1.1) Research focus and scope: Internal Marketing

Internal Marketing is a set of strategies used to stimulate positive cultural change (Gummesson, 1987; Kelemen & Papasolomou-Doukakis, 2004) and structural change within organisations (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; Varey & Lewis, 1999; Winston & Cahill, 2012). IM may streamline internal processes, acting as an integrative mechanism dismantling silos and fostering interdepartmental cooperation and coordination (Ballantyne, 2000; Kelemen, 2000; Hume & Hume, 2014), partially by instigating effective, strategised internal communications (Hogg, Carter & Dunne, 1998; Kale, 2012).

Often conceptualised as an organisational paradigm or management philosophy (George, 1990), IM adopts marketing approaches traditionally used between organisations and external customers, adapting them for internal audiences (Christopher, Payne & Ballantyne, 2013; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2017). It may improve staff performance (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Ballantyne, 1997; Sanchez-Hernandez & Miranda, 2011; Kanyurhi &

Akonkwa, 2016), facilitating relational networks and multidirectional interactivity (Voima, 2001; Lings, 2004; Grace, King & Lo Iacono, 2017). In IM, staff should interact as internal customers within internal service encounters, considering jobs as internal products (Berry, 1984; Greene, Walls & Schrest, 1994; Caruana & Calleya, 1998). This should motivate them towards organisational goals (Grönroos, 1981; Conduit & Mavondo, 2001), partially by encouraging internal market research and exchange, and by facilitating transmission of organisational knowledge and propagating organisational competencies (Gounaris, 2006; Lindner & Wald, 2011). Staff should subsequently orient towards external customers (Sathish, 2016), becoming market-centric (George, 1990; Awwad & Agti, 2011; Day, 2012). As such, IM may be considered a conduit for, or constituent of, Human Resources strategy (Collins & Payne, 1991), or a facilitator of staff recruitment, retention and satisfaction (Berry, 1984; Glassman & McAfee, 1992; Quester & Kelly, 1999; Gounaris, 2006; Alghamdi, 2016). Excepting Hales (1994), who questioned its very legitimacy, commentators consider IM beneficial to organisations, employees and other stakeholders.

This research explores diverse experiences and perspectives of IM, giving voice to previously underrepresented primary stakeholders. It ascertains how IM translates into actions, and its effects, not just on organisational performance, but on the experiences of individual stakeholders. There is an exploration of how IM may be undertaken inappropriately, counterproductively or disingenuously – Internal Demarketing (ID) (Vasconcelos, 2008) emerged from interview findings unexpectedly, prompting a new taxonomisation of ID. The research also contributes methodologically through a new approach to member checking drawing upon autonethnography (Kozinets, 1997; 2010), enhancing research validity. It heeds recent calls (e.g. – Yang & Coates, 2010) to explore dyadic IM perspectives and, in doing so, demonstrates how multiple concepts from CM literature may transfer into IM.

A decision was made regarding which avenues of research would be excluded to ensure cohesiveness and manageability. To distinguish between IM and Human Resource Management (HRM), those organisational approaches perceived as persuasive and not resorting to contractual obligations were considered IM, whilst those leveraging on employment contracts or coercive bargaining were considered HRM – adopting Ahmed & Rafiq's (2002) distinction. However, this delineation, almost universally adopted by IM academics, is contested by HRM researchers who consider it over simplistic or dismissive - especially Hales' (1984).

The overlap of IM literature with other fields was challenging. Whilst IM continues as a research field, many of its themes continue into literature which forsakes IM terminology and even the term 'Internal Marketing'. Organisational Identification, and especially Internal Branding and Employer Branding literature, encompasses IM themes, necessitating consideration of its relationship to IM. However, to manage the research scope, only themes in later literature relating specifically to those in IM literature are explored. The exception was the debate surrounding 'inside-out' (e.g. - Crain, 2009; King & Grace, 2010) versus 'outside-in' (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Miles & Mangold, 2004) within Internal Branding, as certain inherent concerns (e.g. - internal-external market power imbalances) are intertwined with IM concerns.

The research scope was unexpectedly broadened after the initial data collection and analysis revealed ID as a significant theme. Therefore, and because of the limited ID theory (Vasconcelos, 2008), demarketing literature was reviewed after the pilot interview, influencing subsequent interviews and the thesis structure.

1.2) Research aims and objectives

The main research aims are to explore IM from a multi-stakeholder perspective, vocalising previously underrepresented parties and enriching the debate by bringing a democratisation and gaining insights which improve theoretical understanding, potentially informing more appropriate industrial practices.

The main research questions are these:

- 1) *How is IM really undertaken in organisations?***
- 2) *How is it perceived by its primary stakeholders?***
- 3) *To what effect?***

There were also key sub-questions:

- Who designs and enacts IM?
- Who does it target, why and how?
- How are IM meanings and messages transferred from 'sender(s)' to 'receiver(s)'?
- What factors influence stakeholder perceptions of IM?
- How do those perceptions vary across stakeholders?
- May selected CM theories inform IM theory?

Addressing those questions, the key objectives are:

- to ground the study within the IM academic debate, incorporating many perspectives from IM literature and relevant parts of Internal Branding and CM literature;

- to develop appropriate methodologies to explore complementary perspectives of IM, analyse rich data and provide new, methodologically robust insights;
- to explore multiple stakeholder accounts of IM, not just concerning organisational performance, but also relating to individuals' experiences;
- to adopt reflexive approaches to data collection and interpretation;
- to contribute theoretically and empirically to extant IM knowledge, reconceptualising previously underdeveloped areas through fresh perspectives.

Previous articles have focused predominantly on the effects of IM upon organisational performance, using top-down, organisational perspectives, mainly through positivistic, quantitative studies. This research explores the experiences and opinions of diverse stakeholders from different industries and all seniority levels. The gender split is roughly equal, and participants range from recent graduates to retirees. Whilst IM is undoubtedly important to organisations, this research also considers its effects upon internal stakeholders. Although generalisability is not claimed, the sample is purposely broad so the rich insights, and the analyses thereof, may underpin subsequent research seeking to generalise, and positivistic studies attempting to quantify relationships between variables.

The semi-structured phenomenological interviews democratised the research, enabling participants to offer insights unstifled by guided questioning. It was necessary, however, to ground the interview foci in extant theory. To compromise, questioning was open-ended and used a 'light touch' approach. Upon analysis, the pilot was deemed so distinctive and suggestive of theoretical development that it supported a case study (in chapter 8) proposing a new taxonomy of ID. Upon analysis of interviews, it appeared that, whilst the freedom within semi-structured interviews had provided rich data and unanticipated

insights, it had prevented potential transferability of certain CM concepts from being explored sufficiently to address those research objectives. Therefore, an additional iteration of data collection was undertaken, using a focus group of five fresh participants who were comprised solely of managers directly experienced in IM decision-making and implementation, to answer guided questions relating CM theories to IM. As specific questions arising from the literature review were prepared before the focus group and informed the execution of the interview, this data collection was more positivistic than the earlier interviews.

1.3) Additional key concepts informing the research

In addition to IM, the key concepts are demarketing, Internal Demarketing, Internal Branding, and Channel Management – all introduced in this section.

1.3.1) Demarketing

Demarketing – a niche concept within Marketing literature explored in the context of an organisation's external market (Mark & Brennan, 1995) - is the deliberate reduction of demand using those strategies normally used to increase demand (Wright & Egan, 2000; Bradley & Blythe, 2014). This unloading of unprofitable customers whilst retaining profitable ones (Egan, 2001) appears potentially applicable to the internal market. Expanding Kotler & Levy's (1971) seminal demarketing conceptualisation, Bradley & Blythe (2014) divided it into six categories: synchromarketing matches peaks and troughs in demand and supply (Martínez-Ruiz, 2014), counter-marketing counteracts pressure to buy or consume products such as alcohol or tobacco (Boddy, 2014), general demarketing seeks overall reductions in demand (Skinner, 2014), selective demarketing seeks to reduce demand from specific, undesired customer segments (Kotler & Levy, 1971; Farquhar, 2014; Tan, 2014; Bradley & Blythe, 2014), ostensible demarketing appears

aimed at reducing demand whilst covertly seeking to increase it (Bradley & Blythe, 2014; Croft, 2014; McKechnie, 2014), and unintentional demarketing occurs when genuine attempts to increase demand produce the opposite effect (Kotler & Levy, 1971; Kirchner, 2014; Madichie, 2014; Bradley & Blythe, 2014). The concept of demarketing remains niche, with debate centred on ethical considerations and its potential contribution to sustainable production and societal good (e.g. – Tan, 2014).

1.3.2) Internal Demarketing

Internal Demarketing (ID), conceptualised by Vasconcelos (2008) as a corporate malady associated with managerial actions and behaviours, precipitates negative employee perceptions of work, colleagues and organisations, undermining productivity and organisational performance. He suggested that IM and ID are bipolar opposites, ID producing employee dissatisfaction, distrust, poor performance and under-commitment. He identified seven antecedents of ID - psychological contract violation, people devaluing, Quality of Working Life unconcern, poor leadership, blurred vision, the spread of distrust and lack of communication. One may debate whether 'poor leadership' and 'blurred vision' belong at a higher hierarchical level with several others as constituent factors and 'the spread of distrust' and 'the lack of communication' as outcomes. Moreover, Vasconcelos' (2008) conceptualisation resides at a personal level and considers the phenomenon unintentional, rather than questioning if ID can be implemented deliberately and strategically at an organisational level. Vasconcelos' (2008) observation that ID undermines performance suggests it is accidental, although this neglects theory on individual brand saboteurs within organisations (e.g. - Wallace & De Chernatony, 2009). However, if one accepts that the organisational expectation may not be performance deterioration but the marginalisation and exodus of unwanted employees, Vasconcelos' (2008) suggestion becomes questionable.

1.3.3) Internal Branding

Whilst conceptually more holistic (Vallaster & De Chernatony, 2006), the development of Internal Branding (IB) extends IM. It may be interpreted using a 'top-down' perspective as the construction of corporate brands by communicating core values to employees and embedding them in organisational culture (e.g. – Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010). Alternatively, it has been interpreted as a 'bottom-up', democratised, dialogical process in which staff experience organisational acculturation in a participatory manner (e.g. – Brannan, Parson & Priola, 2011). Although conceptualising IB as more 'sophisticated' than IM (e.g. – Vallaster & De Chernatony, 2006) is contentious, it broadens the concept of Employee Brand Orientation underpinning recent IM academic debate. Therefore, IB literature is used to contextualise data findings.

1.3.4) Channel Management

Gremler, Bitner & Evans (1995) and Yang & Coates (2010) suggested adopting dyadic perspectives in IM – a call largely unheeded. This research explores dyadic internal service encounters, and gauges the transferability of dyadic CM concepts into IM contexts. Dyadic interactions were considered a determinant to service provision satisfaction within the organisation when Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel & Gutman (1985) imported theory from an 'organisation > external customer' context. Their seminal article helped underpin Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), considering dyadic relationships as conduits to IM, and distinguishing between the different conditions supporting them and their influence. Whilst Kang, James & Alexandris (2002) categorised internal service encounters, these were uninformed by dyadic perspectives. Therefore, this research explores dyadic perspectives of internal service encounters and the wider IM landscape.

The following areas of CM theory appear most applicable to IM, and are therefore explored within the interviews and focus group. In chapter 9, each is discussed in detail, and rationale offered for their relevance:

the role of satisfaction (section 9.1); the role of interactions in determining satisfaction towards service delivery (section 9.2); the importance of service encounter actors (section 9.3); the effect of organisational change on IM role evolution (section 9.4); the influence of perceived benefits on staff satisfaction and extrinsic motivation (section 9.5); the role of differential and financial benefits (section 9.6); the role of control and satisfaction (section 9.7); relational and psychological benefits (section 9.8); the effects of suspicion within relationships (section 9.9); relational characteristics at individual and organisational levels (section 9.10); the role of the stronger dyadic party's performance in IM relationships (section 9.11); strategies for increasing influence and credibility within interactions (section 9.12); staff and manager control (section 9.13); the roles and influences of dependence, interdependence, and dependence asymmetry on IM relationships (section 9.14); incentivisation of relationship-building (section 9.15); the roles and influences of cooperation and trust (section 9.16); and compliance recognition in dyads (section 9.17).

1.4) Research impact and contributions

This thesis aims to make the following contributions:

To reconceptualise IM by introducing concepts from CM to explore the dyadic nature of IM and the characteristics of interpersonal interactions through which IM is transmitted. This may also enable broader academic understanding of CM theory. By better understanding how IM is undertaken, practitioners should be enabled to pursue more effective IM strategies, benefitting industry and staff, and academics should have new theoretical avenues to explore;

To address potential researcher-participant power imbalances (more likely within positivistic, hypothetico-deductive research) by empowering participants through semi-structured interviews;

Thus, to engender an understanding of IM informed by the perspectives of actors at all levels – policy-makers, managers, transmitters and intermediaries, and the targeted population of IM campaigns – and not just their influence upon IM, but the reciprocal effects of IM on them as individuals. This research aims to complement the predominantly ‘top-down’, organisational perspectives of IM dominating extant literature;

To introduce a new form of member checking using the online interactions of participants, reinterpreting and adapting autonethnography (Kozinets, 1997; 2010), facilitating participant reflexivity, addressing researcher-participant power imbalances and increasing research validity;

Although not originally intended as a potential contribution, this thesis develops the nascent concept of ID (Vasconcelos, 2008; 2011), taxonomising it. Through disseminating this taxonomy, ID may be curtailed, benefitting businesses and staff, and its deliberate organisational use may be detected and countered by staff, managers and unions.

As reflexive data collection and analysis is a key objective, there follows a summary of the researcher’s positionality relating to the subject matter, considering how this may influence the study. As this is a ‘declaration of interest’, it utilises the first person.

1.5) Researcher positionality

I am a relatively new academic in my first institution. Inevitably, I have absorbed certain approaches to research which are representative of faculty and institution ‘personality’, although I have also read widely and discussed extensively with academics from other

institutions. A large proportion of Newcastle Business School (NBS) academics undertake qualitative research and a significant number (including my supervisor, Professor Helen Woodruffe-Burton) undertake research informed by feminist perspectives. It seems inevitable that my choice of the feminist Voice-Centred Relational Method (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) is influenced by institutional heritage.

My exposure to IM has been broad. From 1995 until 2011, I worked in Sales and Marketing roles for SMEs, marketing agencies and as a Regional Manager of a global manufacturer, responsible for brand operations across the Northern UK. I was subjected to conspicuous IM and charged with enacting and implementing IM. These experiences encouraged me to question an assumption seemingly underpinning IM literature - that IM participation is equal across all stakeholders, transcending all hierarchical barriers. I have chosen, as suggested by Yang & Coates (2010), to explore the dyadic nature of IM in which levels of power and authority across multiple stakeholders differ. The findings indicate that, in certain circumstances, some actors may feel that they 'do' IM whilst others have IM 'done' to them, and this is consistent with my industrial experiences.

I believe that the IM which I experienced in industry was not uniformly well-intentioned. Comments made by research participants, particularly relating to ID, fuel my suspicions regarding the potential of IM to harm the target or recipient, perhaps intentionally. However, to ensure that my opinions did not undermine the integrity of the data analysis, I used member checking and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and undertook the researcher's self-audit proposed by Frels & Onwuegbuzie (2012) to achieve 'rigour'. Moreover, I designed a new complementary form of member checking.

Working with one major organisation for thirteen years, I observed the contradictions and reverses in strategy occurring longitudinally, and the subtle, obscured ways in which things get done. Consequently, I embrace a postmodernist perspective of organisations – that they operate cyclically and iteratively; that much organisational knowledge is informal and tacit; and that their actions are not necessarily societally beneficial. By reflecting upon these assumptions, and through member checking, I have prevented them from colouring the analysis incommensurately with participants' experiences.

1.6) Thesis structure

Chapter 1 has explained the research focus, contribution to knowledge and practice, and distinctiveness relative to other studies. It has identified key concepts informing the research and their interrelationships. The conceptual overlaps between IM, Internal Branding and CM have been explained. It has defined the research scope, its intended impact on IM and its stakeholders, stating its aims and objectives. The researcher positionality has been declared, discussing the researcher's role. In this section, the thesis structure is outlined, and a chapter summary follows.

Chapter 2 comprehensively reviews IM literature, exploring varied theoretical and philosophical standpoints, and critically analysing individual concepts and their interrelatedness. It identifies areas for exploration through data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3 critiques theoretical concepts within recent literature arising directly from IM theory – particularly Internal Branding, Organisational and Brand Identity, and Brand Orientation – examining their relationships with, and evolution from, IM. Their theoretical relevance, and the scope for this research to join the debate, is outlined,

Chapter 4 introduces CM concepts, proposing how theory regarding interorganisational relationships may apply to IM. The rationale is explained, as is the viability and value of transferring specific key theories. Dyadic perspectives most likely to expand the IM concept are summarised, to be analysed fully in chapter 9.

Chapter 5 declares the ontological and epistemological commitments, discussing their influence upon methodological choices presented in chapter 6. An explanation is provided of the phenomenological approach adopted, and the role which bracketing is to play.

Chapter 6 details the rationale for the methodological choices, explaining their consistency with the ontological and epistemological perspectives declared in chapter 5, and discussing how they facilitate research rigour. It clarifies how the literature has been reviewed, the criteria used to judge credible qualitative research, and the interrelated strategies adopted to achieve this. The strategic choices appertaining to sampling, participant selection, data collection and interview conduct are clarified. There is an explanation of how the pilot interview was subjected to Template Analysis, identifying themes for exploration in subsequent interviews and the focus group, and of how interview and focus group data was subjected to VCRM analysis. Additionally, ethical issues and methodological limitations are discussed.

Chapter 7 presents interview findings, analysing underlying meanings and contextualising them against extant theory, describing how they may expand understanding of the field - particularly by exploring IM from multi-stakeholder perspectives often underrepresented in the literature.

Chapter 8 presents case study findings from the pilot interview which appertain to the emerging theme of ID – itself barely explored since its conceptualisation by Vasconcelos (2008) – proposing a taxonomy of ID comprising (i) Unintentional ID, (ii) Ostensible IM, (iii) Selective IM; and (iv) Selective ID. It discusses their characteristics, and potential effects on the organisation and other stakeholders.

Chapter 9 presents focus group findings, exploring the applicability to IM of those concepts from CM literature identified in chapter 4. It discusses the extent to which they appear readily transferable, considering the implications for academics and practitioners.

Chapter 10 provides analysis of the findings explored in chapters 7, 8 and 9, contextualising them against extant theory. It explains the potential importance of the research in terms of its methodological, theoretical and empirical contributions. It evaluates the fulfilment of research aims and objectives, highlighting research limitations and suggesting potential areas for future research.

This is followed by supporting materials in the appendices, and a full reference list.

1.7) Summary of Chapter 1

This chapter has introduced the research foci, their importance to the broader academic debate and to multiple stakeholders within industry. The key concepts informing the research have been explored. Whilst IM is the key focus, ID was also introduced. Moreover, the concepts of Internal Branding were discussed, as they represent a recent

tradition through which IM concepts are continued and cultivated, albeit often in a context more closely linked to external branding. Several seminal theories from CM literature were also introduced, as their applicability to IM, and their potential to help reconceptualise IM, are central to the thesis. The intended research impact and contributions, its aims and objectives, were outlined, and the effect of researcher positionality declared. Finally, the structure of the thesis was presented.

The following chapter will comprise a comprehensive, thematic analysis of the extant academic literature in IM.

Chapter 2) Internal Marketing and associated fields of study

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This chapter analyses academic literature on Internal Marketing and those concepts considered its constituent parts, identifying areas for further interrogation by this research.

2.1) Defining Internal Marketing – concept and philosophy

The diverse definitions of IM enliven the debate surrounding it, but perhaps hinder its accessibility to industry. Whilst “*there does not exist a single unified notion of what is meant by IM*” (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993, p.219), it comprises both a field of academic research and literature, and a branch of organisational activity (Sasser & Arbeit, 1976). As the debate has broadened, IM is perceived more holistically than simply the transferal of marketing practices from external to internal organisational environments (e.g. – Varey & Lewis, 1999). Moreover, several studies (e.g. – Lee, Gombeski & Doremus, 1991; O’Cass, 2001) have implicitly criticised previous definitions as narrow, sector-specific and

lacking socio-organisational contextualisation. Woodruffe (1995, p.86) acknowledged that IM need not be bounded by function or commercialism as an end goal, defining it thus:

“Treating with equal importance the needs of the internal market – the employees – and the external market through proactive programmes and planning to bring about desired organisational objectives by delivering both employee and customer satisfactions”.

Early research often conceptualised IM as a strategy targeting boundary personnel – boundary-spanners interacting with external customers – encouraging behaviours likely to increase sales (Berry, Hensel & Burke, 1976). However, as management studies acknowledged the value and sources of competitive advantage in different areas of organisations (e.g. – Porter, 1980), the literature focused more on IM’s potential to attract, motivate, develop, retain and satisfy staff (e.g. – Grönroos, 1981; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993) - a concept expanded elsewhere by conceptualising employees as customers (Berry, 1981), and jobs as products addressing personal needs (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991, p.151).

Ballantyne (2003) envisaged IM as a process for managing knowledge and relationships within modern organisations (Christopher et al, 2013), in which both supplier and customer are located internally. (Collins & Payne, 1991). By treating employees as internal customers, external Marketing strategies could be aimed internally within the organisation (Berry, 1981), these activities complementing externally focused ones (Barnes, 1989).

The concept of 'employee as customer' was considered an over-extension of IM by theorists suggesting a more defined remit bounded by adoption of "marketing-like techniques" internal to the organisation (Ahmed & Rafiq, 1995, p.34) – building upon Rafiq & Ahmed's (1993) definition separating IM from HRM by its lack of coercion. Mudie (2003) criticised the concepts of internal customers and internal products, suggesting they assumed a universally motivated, committed, pliable workforce without considering those rebellious, disenfranchised employees conscious of their internal customer role. As such, he suggested reconceptualising IM, although not through the dyadic, bottom-up perspectives driving this research. Lings (2000) rejected Berry's (1981) concept of 'employee as customer', as it ignored employee heterogeneity and internal service expectations, concluding that many traditional marketing activities lack relevance to internal stakeholders.

Hennig-Thurau (2005), researching boundary-spanners, moved towards dyadic perspectives which may also inform how IM could use marketing to manage specifically interactive internal activities, although using IM to improve organisational efficiency (e.g. – Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Ballantyne, 1997; Ballantyne, 2000) and customer orientation (e.g. – Grönroos, 1981; Ballantyne, 1997; Christopher et al, 2013) were well-established concepts. Lings (2000) believed IM should accommodate differences between, and the interdependence of, internal and external markets, and employees' functional roles, to improve efficiency.

Perhaps the dominant definition of IM came from Rafiq & Ahmed (2000), who saw it as an umbrella function encapsulating employee motivation, the encouragement of customer orientation to increase satisfaction amongst (external) customers, inter-departmental and cross-functional integration and the dismantling of silos, the reapplication of external marketing practices, and the implementation of strategies specific to organisational needs.

Thus, they expanded their earlier definition of IM's breaking "*organisational resistance to change*" (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993, p.222), in the alignment, motivation and integration of staff, and strategy implementation. In both cases, their vision of IM was fluid and multi-dimensional. Money & Foreman's (1996) itemisation of IM's remit was conceptual – comprising development, reward and vision – although these categories could perhaps help practitioners to operationalise IM if superimposed upon Rafiq & Ahmed's (1993) framework.

Grönroos (1985) also defined IM, stating that it should engage all employees (not just boundary personnel) in marketing activities through interactive engagement, although it is unclear how IM would move employees between the strategic and tactical engagement, and how its effectiveness could be gauged. His definition is important, extending employees' roles by using interaction to promote sales-mindedness, and ameliorate internal relationships and transactions, through traditional marketing techniques. George (1990) also believed such techniques should motivate internal stakeholders, instilling service-mindedness and customer orientation. However, he and others made scant differentiation between sales-mindedness and service-mindedness – the potentially misleading implication being that they share common drivers and antecedents. Ballantyne (2000) envisaged a broader IM role, suggesting that treating employees as customers improves their satisfaction levels, autonomy and creativity, raising service quality (to external customers).

Berry's (1981) conceptualisation of IM as internal exchange logic focused less on interpersonal transactions within organisations, more on how organisations and employees could exchange value. Rafiq & Ahmed (1993; 2000) shifted emphasis toward interdepartmental transactions, highlighting IM's potential to engender cross-functional integration and alignment, producing a matrix organisation. This reflected the view that, by

satisfying employees through marketing techniques, it would satisfy external customers by providing better service (George, 1977) – and that IM is the management of organisational relationships (Voima, 2000).

The scope, definition and principles of IM remain elusive (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000), especially in relation to HRM, with Hales (1994) vociferously critical of IM, believing its functions represent a relabelling of established HRM strategies and tactics – an encroachment by marketers. Ahmed & Rafiq (2002) argued that IM should persuade, coerce or leverage contractual obligations, as HRM may. However, it is elsewhere suggested that IM and HRM overlap, or that IM be incorporated within HRM, its theories, principles and operational technologies (Joseph, 1996). Addressing ambiguities in defining IM requires clarification (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002), and the development of a unifying terminology seems beneficial – the rationale behind Lings' (2004) formulation of an agreed IM construct.

In constructing a conceptual framework for IM, Yang & Coates (2010) gathered four diverse ideas: (i) that the concept of an Internal Market be implicit (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002); (ii) that understanding (internal) service encounters be informed by ideas from wider (external) service literature (Czepiel, Solomon, Surprenant & Gutman, 1985); (iii) that situational factors define IM (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985); and (iv) that IM be defined by closer understanding of the roles of IM participants. Therefore, the framework used Ahmed & Rafiq's (2003) conceptualisation of IM as an organisational philosophy formulated to address employees and organisational needs through emotionally intelligent endeavours.

Bansal, Mendelson & Sharma (2001) noted an expansion of the IM concept from the late 1980s. Some (e.g. – Ishikawa, 1985) thought it dated from 1950s' Total Quality Management (TQM) literature, whilst others (e.g. – Varey & Lewis, 1999) saw IM as self-contained and independent of TQM, emerging in the 1970s. It is considered by most academics a management philosophy (e.g. – Grönroos, 1981; Grönroos, 1985; Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003), encompassing the attraction and retention of high quality staff (George, 1990; Collins & Payne, 1991; Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Glassman & McAfee, 1992), the capitalising upon Marketing potential when applied internally to organisations (Ahmed & Rafiq, 1995), and the integration of Marketing with HRM – sometimes implementing marketing through HRM to promote desirable organisational behaviours (Glassman & McAfee, 1992). George (1990) considered IM a philosophy to manage human resources using a marketing perspective, with Berry & Parasuraman (1991, p.151) expanding this by identifying its potential to attract, develop, motivate and retain suitably qualified staff *“through job products that satisfy their needs”*.

Grönroos (1981; 1985), classifying IM as a management philosophy, stressed the importance of interactivity, whereas Varey (1995) broadened the IM framework beyond the Marketing function to a socio-cultural activity chain, integrating within social groupings values not directly connected with economics, thus facilitating reorientation of the organisation. Ahmed & Rafiq (2003, p.1180) recognised IM's potential to coordinate multiple activities, being a holistic management philosophy – the business elements coordinated *“including internal and external relationships, networks, interaction and collaborations”*, by understanding individual activities and factors which contribute to customer satisfaction within *“the internal supply chain”*.

Rafiq & Ahmed (1995) saw the development of IM literature in three stages: (i) conceptualisation (primarily employee satisfaction); (ii) customer orientation; and (iii)

change management and strategy implementation. Hwang & Chi (2005) added another four stages: (iv) considering employees as internal customers; (v) the development of employees' customer-oriented behaviours; (vi) an orientation towards HRM; and (vii) internal exchange. Their extension moves away from discussing the conceptual progression towards discussing the organisational strategies which the concepts may encompass. An indication of the literary evolution, and the different levels of conceptualisation, is the difference between IM's definition simply as a strategic perspective (Webster, 1992) and later as an "*emotionally intelligent philosophy*" (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003, p.1184) – although later definitions (e.g. - Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003) also explored operational factors underpinning the philosophy, such as individuals' emotional needs within the internal market, organisational goals, mechanisms to improve integration and interfunctionality, and employees' affective involvement and commitment to organisational aims. Likewise, when Ahmed & Rafiq (2003) saw consensus within IM literature in defining how IM builds upon the fostering of closer relationships between organisations and employees, this was used by Papasolomou-Doukakis & Kitchen (2004) to theorise IM as a range of managerial activities changing organisational cultures to adopt the same exchange logic internal to the organisation as to external relationships.

2.2) Roles of Internal Marketing

Although numerous academics have stressed IM's role in attracting, retaining and motivating capable, committed staff (e.g. – Thomson et al, 1978; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993) and in training and managing them to ensure consistent service (McDonald, De Chernatony & Harris, 2001), fewer (e.g. – Greene et al, 1994) have discussed how IM incorporates active promotion of the organisation to internal stakeholders. Schultz (2004; 2006) believed IM more crucial than external marketing, considering employee satisfaction a precursor to customer satisfaction (Fisk et al, 1993) and that staff convey to external customers feelings surrounding their daily experiences – employers "*gain the*

rewards of [employee] commitment" (Pitt & Foreman, 1999, p.31). Berry (1981), whilst seeing employees as internal customers and jobs as internal products (Keller, Lynch, Ellinger, Ozment & Calantone, 2006), believed satisfying employees' needs should concur with delivery of organisational objectives, with the former facilitating the latter. Likewise, although Winter's (1985) understanding of IM seemed sympathetic to addressing employee needs, he saw the overarching aim of IM as managing, educating and aligning employees towards interdepartmental fulfilment of organisation objectives. Varey & Lewis (1999) considered IM important in these areas, but were mindful of employee needs, arguing that the role and structure of IM made it manipulative of staff.

The views of O'Callaghan (2009) and Witt & Rode (2005) typified those emerging since 2000, blurring the distinctions between IM, Internal Branding and Employee Branding, and deeming them equally important in building the external brand to meet customer demands - although earlier, Garvin (1987) linked corporate image to organisational reputation, which itself is influenced by the organisation-staff relationship. Bansal et al (2001) and Ewing & Caruana (1999) asserted that IM's key role should be improving service quality and consumer satisfaction.

IM's key benefits were predominantly linked to internal structure and functionality by Tansuhaj et al (1987) and Piercy (2002), who thought IM critical for implementing organisational strategy. Ahmed & Rafiq (1993) also saw IM's implementational value, highlighting its potential efficacy in enabling organisations to overcome internal resistance to strategic change, though later (2000) they placed this within the context of promoting inter-functionality, integrating and coordinating employees, and aligning them towards the strategy implementation – to create committed, customer-oriented staff who deliver customer satisfaction. Later still (2003), they detailed how a balance could be reached between individuals' needs and organisational goals, utilising employees' unique skills

and capabilities to build organisation-wide competences. Darling & Taylor (1989) envisaged a more mechanised IM role, reducing inter-departmental conflict, resistance to strategic change, silos and functional isolationism.

The most prominent research into IM has addressed issues which are not sector-specific, and Harrell & Fors (1992) broadened IM's scope from services organisations to manufacturing companies. Moreover, Knox et al (2004), seeing product and service commoditisation as threats to enduring competitive advantage, suggested the nurturing of relationships between customers and the organisation and brand. Bell, Mengüç & Stefani (2004) were more radical still, proffering IM as a framework to supplant traditional external relationships. Peltier, Schibrowsky & Schultz (2003) trod the middle ground, suggesting that organisations could become more customer-conscious by adopting IM.

Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler (2012), noting that traditional Marketing attempts to make and deliver customer promises, nonetheless stopped short of suggesting this be transferred to the internal market, although Del Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias' (2001) description of customer benefits – as customer perceived brand value – was considered applicable internally. Ahmed & Rafiq (2003) thought IM an enabler, especially in nurturing creative employees delivering organisational competencies, and Gounaris (2006; 2008) linked IM to empowerment – a theme under-represented in the literature or swamped by the commercial considerations which it is intended to address. Schultz (2004) envisaged IM's remit encompassing implementation of tactics facilitating stakeholder support for strategised programmes and their delivery, whilst Gummesson (1987) and Ahmed & Rafiq (2003) saw IM as possessing potential to save organisations from themselves by moderating their opportunistic, self-interested behaviours towards external stakeholders.

A broad consensus acknowledges IM's crucial role in managing internal and external relationships (e.g. - Grönroos, 1981; Gummesson, 1987; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; Voima, 2000), but its role attracts widely diffused interpretations (Hales, 1994). Perhaps the most detailed discussion of the specific factors fuelling the need for IM was produced in a consultancy paper by Samms (1999), who identified the following: (i) macro changes in organisational structure, such as mergers, takeovers or downsizing, which necessitate thorough and ongoing communication between organisation and employees; (ii) organisational rebranding which necessitates communication to all stakeholders; (iii) a desire for increased employee focus on the customer relationship, which requires training; (iv) increased outsourcing, which demands that outsourced staff are trained in brand values; (v) a desire for greater reciprocity between organisation and employees, which may be achievable through the strength of the internal brand; and (vi) the adoption of new working practices or strategic alliances. Participants in this research have experienced these conditions.

2.3) Elements of Internal Marketing

Much IM literature contemplates its characteristics rather than its elements. Dunmore (2005) addressed this, proposing seven elements: (i) IM defines and instils organisational vision, missions, values and culture at a interpersonal and interdepartmental level; (ii) it unifies disparate ideas and actions into a coherent corporate strategy; (iii) it communicates ways in which processes and services are undertaken, describing standards and measures used for gauging success; (iv) it manages organisational knowledge; (v) it drives internal communication throughout the organisation; (vi) it informs HRM strategy; (vii) it galvanises marketing across internal and external environments.

Although also questioning IM conceptually, Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) saw the strands of IM as (i) employee satisfaction and motivation; (ii) staff orientation towards customers, and customer satisfaction; (iii) interdepartmental integration and co-ordination, and encouragement of interfunctionality; (iv) application of marketing approaches to internal activities; and (v) a route to implementing strategies. It may therefore be useful for practitioners designing IM strategies to combine these two critiques.

Less conceptually, Ahmed & Rafiq (2003) reapplied the Marketing Mix elements (Borden, 1964) to the internal environment. Thus, 'Price' became the cost – emotional and otherwise – to staff, in experiencing and carrying IM; 'Promotion' the process of Internal Communication between organisation and employees; 'Product' was employees' jobs; 'Place' the tactics for engaging internal customers; 'Physical Evidence' the guidelines, memos, and anything reinforcing the higher aims of IM; 'Process' was how the employee received service, either from the organisation or from each other via Internal Service Encounters; 'People' were not 'employees' but Internal Service Providers (placing employees in a dyadic, less hierarchically confined definition). 'Place' could equally apply to the workplace, its adherence to IM principles and user-friendliness, or the location of dyadic interaction – an Internal Service Encounter. Dibb (1997; 2001) considered 'place' the internal departments across which IM passes – a recognition of dyads outside an interorganisational context. Piercy & Morgan (1991) were more structural, considering 'place' as venues where product delivery and communication would occur, created by social and technical factors. Physical evidence was central to Bansal et al's (2001) ideas on IM, and they believed that, as higher service quality is perceived by customers through physical evidence of delivery, customer satisfaction levels increase commensurately.

Several researchers proposed changes to the Marketing Mix, to tailor it to IM. The addition of 'performance' (Fisk, Grove & John, 2007) stresses the conveyance of IM by

organisations to staff, and the flow of service between employees – considerations prompting a practitioner, Beckwith (2009), to add ‘packaging’. Fryar (1991) suggested that organisations should use ‘positioning’ through IM to offer staff sufficiently differentiated ‘products’. When English (2000) added ‘personal relationship’, it expressed the idea – already explored in dyadic channel literature (e.g. – Lai, 2007) – that ‘chemistry’ and empathy in interpersonal relationships are as important to the growth and longevity of a service relationship than organisation-level actions, therefore sharing the postmodernist understanding of tacit influences. The influence of these additions upon subsequent research has been minimal, and the forced use of categories beginning with ‘p’ perhaps presents them as spurious (O’Malley & Patterson, 1998; Harker & Egan, 2006).

IM elements described by Keller, Lynch, Ellinger, Ozmont & Calantone (2006) include internal customer performance, internal customer job satisfaction, internal promotion and interdepartmental customer orientation, although these should perhaps be identified as consequences, not elements, of IM – except for internal promotion. Likewise, when Finn, Baker, Marshall & Anderson (1996) called for proactive feedback, respect, accuracy and speed, and good use of information, the discussion focused on how IM elements should be operationalised.

Whilst there are relatively few practitioner-aimed insights in the literature, Tansuhaj, Randall & McCullough (1988; 1991) contributed to practice, their suggestions including the following: that organisations maintain a positive attitude toward employees; that staff be included in recruitment (bestowing legitimacy on the successful candidate); by offering training formally and through mentoring; by communicating and targeting actions towards achievable goals; by providing an environment where staff communicate and contribute; by having a longitudinal information flow from organisation to employees explaining the rationale behind strategies within the wider environmental context; by facilitating two-way

feedback; and by better understanding (and explaining to employees) links between performance and reward – although this use of ‘positive reinforcement’ and its behavioural stance seems slightly incongruous with IM.

Schultz (2004; 2006) understood IM to comprise organisational activities, decisions and instructions, encouraging stakeholders to support organisational actions and programmes, whereas Dunmore (2005) considered Employer Branding IM’s dominant ingredient to attract, retain and develop high quality staff.

Brand is important within IM. Positive brand image may bring commercial success, especially where brands are not merely built upon product offerings but on the organisation’s actions, externally and internally, and its perception by external and internal customers (Kasper, van Helsingden, & Gabbott, 2006). Furthermore, Keller (2009) argued that organisations with the strongest brand image tailor external marketing activities to fit their IM – implying primacy of the internal market. As brand image stems from perceptions and symbolism (Low & Lamb, 2000), reflecting attributes, customer benefits and attitudes (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998), IM practitioners must adopt dimensions of brand identity which resonate with internal customers, just as marketers have with external customers (Aaker, 1996). These twelve dimensions cluster under four perspectives – whether the brand is perceived by staff as a product, an organisation, a person or a symbol.

Other researchers less concerned with brand have scrutinised the interconnectedness of internal communication, relationship building and IM (e.g. – Oliver, 1997; Kitchen, 2005). Grunig (1992) saw internal communication as a way of conveying information on organisational affairs, whereas Argenti (1998) envisaged it facilitating interpersonal communication between employees, and Ballantyne (2000) as the vehicle for establishing

relationships within organisations to renew and refresh knowledge. Most writers believe IM encompasses a rich mixture of concepts and strategies (Kelemen & Papasolomou-Doukakis, 2004).

2.4) Aims and potential of Internal Marketing

Berry & Parasuraman (1991) posited that IM takes place in three distinct phases: (i) motivating employees by treating them as customers; (ii) reorienting employees (and the organisation) towards customers; and (iii) managing change and implementing strategy, anticipating performance gains. However, most articles focus on one phase.

Sasser & Arbeit's (1976) assertion that IM should afford primacy to the employee market is still fiercely contested. Brooks, Lings & Botschen (1999) agreed, believing IM a process conditioning the internal market to satisfy the needs of internal customers. More often, IM's role in employee motivation and satisfaction (e.g. – Barnes, 1989) is not envisaged as altruistic, but coupled with ongoing measurement of employees' task performance to improve productivity (Tansuhaj, Wong & McCullough, 1987; Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). Although it is widely accepted that IM places internal stakeholders central to any strategy for organisational gains (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003), this is usually considered a means to an end.

In motivating employees and making them more customer-conscious, Grönroos (1981) expected IM to bring sales-mindedness and integrate individuals and departments. However, he did not anticipate employees being treated as customers, but being made more familiar with external customer requirements, to capitalise upon employee-customer interactions as sales and market opportunities. This is reinforced by Zerbe, Dobni &

Harel's (1998) idea of IM engendering widespread service and customer focus within organisational culture, but according to Varey & Lewis (2000) should grow from the corporate strategies and relationships it pursues. In using negotiation, enthusiastic actions and other marketing approaches as stimulants within the internal market, Grönroos (1994) believed employees could be persuaded into more customer-oriented, service-aware behaviours – indeed, he conceptualised IM as a conduit for improving customer-oriented behaviour (1985). Hogg & Carter (2000) likewise stated that IM should engender a service culture and instil customer-consciousness. Ahmed et al's (2003) focus, on creating highly efficient work systems through management of the IM mix elements, sought to boost business performance by achieving higher competencies individually and organisationally, whereas Greene, Walls & Schrest (1994) sought a one-dimensional aim – that of promoting the organisation, its products and brands to employees, instilling product knowledge and encouraging customer service skills. Gummesson (1987) linked those writers focused heavily on either the internal or external market as the principle arena for IM's outcomes, noting that the interdependence between them facilitates implementation of organisational strategies and pursuance of organisational goals.

De Bussy, Ewing & Pitt (2003) were amongst many authors who believed balancing individuals' needs with organisational goals is necessary to increase organisational performance. Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) identified IM's positive contribution in reducing employee role ambiguity – like the dyadic domain dissensus within CM theory (e.g. – Rosenberg & Stern, 1971) – this effect being recognised in manufacturing organisations (Foreman & Money, 1995), though not considered pivotal to IM. In increasing job satisfaction and employee commitment (e.g. - Tansuhaj et al, 1987; 1988; 1991), and effecting attitudinal and behavioural change (Varey, 1995), IM can increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, engender innovation, ameliorate industrial relations, reduce financial outlay and improve service quality (Paul, Niehoff & Turnley, 2000).

IM may be used for specific purposes and have socio-political aims outside the non-services sector, such as when interrelationships between internal and external stakeholders have been explored in healthcare provision (Lee, Gombeski & Doremus, 1991). The relationships fostered might remain informal if IM is implemented to increase organisational innovation (Hayton, 2005). However, even when IM, and internal communications, are intended to inform employees about strategies, policies and practices, fostering community spirit and employee buy-in (Elving, 2005), these internal activities invariably pursue external performance improvements (Gabbott & Hogg, 2001), and the organisation's internal priorities are compared with external ones (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991).

2.5) Organisational vision, commitment and change

IM can commit employees emotionally to their organisations (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993) as a process (Ahmed & Rafiq, 1995) to ensure the success of the marketing plan (Piercy & Morgan, 1994), positively influence working attitudes and foster Organisational Commitment (OC) (Tansuhaj et al, 1991; Gabbott & Hogg, 1996). Ahmed & Rafiq (2003, p.1182) described a "*circle of reciprocity*" in which, through demonstrating commitment to employees, the organisation reaps required commitment from staff, contributing to objective fulfilment. Despite consensus that IM can drive OC, OC's nature is contested. O'Reilly & Chatman (1986) believed the psychological attachment leading to OC comprised two dimensions – employee identification with the organisation and internalisation of organisational values and norms. However, Meyer & Allen (1991) believed OC a three-dimensional structure, with an employee's emotional ties and identification with an organisation encouraging them to stay, their commitment derived from perception of exit barriers necessitating that they stay, and their sense of obligation persuading them that staying is morally correct. They termed these affective, continuance

and normative dimensions respectively. OC has also been considered dependent upon the potency of an employee's identification with the organisation and their level of involvement with it (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974; Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979; Baron, Greenberg, DeNisi & Goddard, 1990), loyalty levels and intensity of attachment felt by employees toward the organisation (Guimaraes, 1996), and loyalty and satisfaction (Jamieson & Richards, 1996). OC is a key influence upon levels of interaction between staff and external customers (Jamieson & Richards, 1996), with IM positively influencing affective OC (Caruana & Calleya, 1998).

Varey & Lewis' (1999) conceptualisation of IM, as a social, goal-focused process delivering organisational change in response to macro-environmental shifts, differed little from Ahmed & Rafiq's (1995) description of a suite of techniques for implementing change management within multiple contexts, and Piercy's (2002) description of a mechanism in strategic change implementation. Ahmed & Rafiq's (1993) desire for IM to overcome organisational resistance to change as a holistic strategy may have been to realign employees interfunctionally towards implementation of organisational (not function-specific) strategies, later explored by Hogg, Carter & Dunne (1998) in terms of an 'enculturation' process facilitating this change. Dunmore (2005) thought organisations should implement strategic change ever quicker, and that some models for strategic planning were obsolescent due to their prescriptive nature and focus on external factors to the neglect of internal ones – justifying IM. IM's role in enabling employees (e.g. - to work efficiently and treat customers well) improves service quality and ultimately boosts external market performance (Green et al, 1994).

2.6) Internal Marketing as integrative mechanism

IM has been conceptualised as a conduit for integrative exchanges of value (Ahmed & Rafiq, 1995; Varey & Lewis, 1999), aligning employees' actions towards organisational strategy implementation at an interfunctional level (Grönroos, 1981), dismantling functional silos (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003) and placing co-ordination central to its philosophy (George, 1990; Berry, 1981; Collins & Payne, 1991; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). Bak, Vogt, George & Greentree (1994) and Davis (2001) saw integration as an antecedent to market orientation and customer-mindedness, whilst Glassman & McAfee (1992) saw that the activities being integrated could be mixed from across marketing and non-marketing functions, with employees gaining a holistic understanding of all jobs, rather than theirs alone. However, the academic discussion of integration is limited, being tackled predominantly at an interfunctional level (e.g. - Grönroos, 1981; 1985) and in terms of organisational processes such as production, and social integration (e.g. – Grönroos, 1981; Thomson, 1998; Kelemen, 2000), and it is for this reason that the effects of IM upon individuals is to be interrogated in this research.

Researchers such as Ivancevich & Gilbert (2000) focused on integration at a managerial level, claiming that IM could encourage managers to clarify objectives and remits, devolve implementary powers, and identify internal entrepreneurs to lead peers through organisational change, while others (e.g. – George, 1990; Varey, 1995; Schultz, 2004) also saw integration as a management-level process but more holistically and less prescriptively, including non-human factors like processes and ethics. Davis (2001) believed IM a guarantee of interaction between employees and functions to deliver added value internally and externally, although Ahmed & Rafiq (2003, p.1180) wished IM to be utilised more broadly in removing factionalising barriers between employees to deliver “*strategic coherence*”. As a philosophy to integrate functions (George, 1990), neutralise interfunctional politics (Caruana, Ewing & Ramaseshan, 2000), detonate conflict (Rafiq &

Ahmed, 1993), reduce functional isolation or improve interfunctional cooperation (Christopher et al, 2013), IM's framework for integration is holistic (George, 1990).

IM may also be an umbrella framework within the organisation, incorporating or complementing other internal processes (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993), so the employee is aligned not solely to a function but to a collective process (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2003). As an integrative managerial approach, it has thus been described as 'total' (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). Grönroos (1985), Varey (1995) and Schultz (2004) emphasised that IM should fit into other parts of the organisation – people, machinery, materials or processes – in driving interfunctional efficiencies. Certain research has focused on IM's junction with other functions, such as the internal communication process between management and employees (Hogg et al, 1998) – which falls short of introducing dyadic perspectives. Moreover, since 2000, the boundaries of IM and closely related fields like Internal Branding have become blurred – for instance, in LePla, Davis & Parker's (2003) study into effects of integrated branding on service delivery and brand perception.

2.7) Organisational culture, and Internal Marketing's relationship with Human Resource Management

There are close ties between IM and organisational culture (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003) - those systems of cognition dictating employees' behaviours, values and beliefs (Pettigrew, 1990). The role which marketing should play and the messages it transmits, and management efficacy, are dictated by organisational culture (Parasuraman & Deshpande, 1984), with improvements in organisational effectiveness deriving from behaviours inherent within it (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). Schein (2010) believed that cultural elements held tacitly amongst social groupings were assumptions, values and artefacts - assumptions being those opinions and beliefs taken at face value, artefacts the traditions,

rituals and other representations of culture, and values the ways in which employees pursue preferred outcomes through preferred actions. As IM makes individual and organisational behaviour more manageable, it can build competencies, affecting routines and practices to form organisational identity (Papazolomou-Doukakis & Kitchen, 2004) – the shared organisational values not simply engendering desirable behaviours like loyalty, but contributing to collective organisational culture (Wallace, Hunt & Richards, 1999).

Employees can be aligned towards organisational objectives and institutional values when they understand programme benefits (Winter, 1985). IM constructs the conditions for transmitting cultural norms (Hogg et al, 1998) for organisational benefit. Ahmed & Rafiq (2003, p.1178) described a 'collective mind' helping form corporate identity, and Davis (2001) described both the performativity and expected behaviours when managers and staff interact. However, both articles are slightly limited in exploring how culture flows horizontally in firms, rather than trickling down or being enforced by diktat. Individuals' behaviours are emanations of culture and display the level of customer-orientation in the organisation (Deshpande et al, 1993), therefore IM shapes customer contact encounters (Flipo, 1986). Grönroos (1985) stated that, as an organisation could influence its internal market more than its external one, IM is the most efficient builder of external relationships. However, he did not state whether the comparative ease of influencing the internal market comes from relationship length and proximity or from employees' contractual obligations – which would imply HRM invading IM's remit.

Foreman & Money (1995) and Pitt & Foreman (1999) believed IM had encroached upon HRM territory, whilst Hales (1994) thought it an aggressive invasion. Glassman & McAfee (1992) distinguished between the two functions, understanding IM's role as the integration of marketing, whereas HRM should resource the marketing function with appropriate personnel. This is unusual in asserting that HRM should be subservient to IM. Bak et al

(1994) also suggested that IM manage human resources from a marketing paradigm. Moreover, Joseph (1996) asserted that, by building IM into a super-concept embracing HRM theories, principles and practices, it could become more effective. In contrast, Collins & Payne (1991) implied that IM was a specific way of conducting HRM by instilling a marketing perspective, drawing upon Tansuhaj et al (1988) and Grönroos (1985), and echoed by Ahmed et al (2003), whilst elsewhere IM was believed an antecedent to efficacious HRM, especially within the Public Sector (Ewing & Caruana, 1999). By conceptualising IM as a new service-oriented culture for spreading values within an organisation, it was elsewhere seen to help HRM develop market-oriented, customer-conscious staff (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002; Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2013) and satisfied customers and employees (Hwang, 2005). Whilst viewing IM and HRM as separate, Glassman & McAfee (1992) recommended the integration and alignment of the two functions to improve the efficiency of both.

In defining the boundary between IM and HRM, Kotler & Levy (1969) used IM's lack of coercion as a distinguishing feature, and Ahmed & Rafiq (2002) noted that IM should not rely on the formalised mechanisms utilised by HRM – although it is not specified that these are contractual. Unlike IM, HRM may use formal authority within task-oriented management, to attract, recruit, develop and reward staff and terminate employment (Willman, 1989), whereas Collins & Payne (1991) considered IM equally centred around the management of people as a resource. Whilst Joseph (1996) believed that service quality for internal and external customers could be improved by combining IM and HRM, and that IM should seek this, Hales (1994) denied IM's relation to, or influence over, HRM, considering it a mislabelling of traditional HRM procedures. In seeking a broad conceptualisation of IM addressing these interactions with HRM, Ahmed et al (2003) and Gummeson (1987) examined literature in both fields. However, whilst recognising, albeit

implicitly, the dyadic nature of internal relationships, they drew neither from the CM literature on conflict and dyads, nor Social or Occupational Psychology literature.

2.8) Demands, resistance, limitations and criticisms of Internal Marketing

Kotler et al (2003) posited that organisations must act positively towards employees, and employee needs must be satisfied before those of customers by applying external practices to the internal market. To implement such a programme, IM should fit the organisational culture and vision, engender employee identification with the organisation, include staff in important decisions, and provide an open communication flow (Naude, Desai & Murphy, 2003). To develop and maintain IM programmes, it is beneficial to build cross-functional teams (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995). This may be problematic, as these team members may be pivotal in their current roles. Demands may be placed upon employees – especially at programme outset – requesting delivery of service levels to colleagues which match those provided to customers (Cahill, 1995). However, as each employee becomes benefactor and beneficiary, this demand is lessened. IM requires training programmes to address IM-specific objectives and orient staff towards them, whilst empowering employees (Liu, Petruzzi & Sudharshan, 2007), who must be motivated through training to deliver appropriate customer service levels (Bradley, 2003).

Successful IM needs internal stakeholder awareness and support, constant development to fit the organisation, and for employees to understand and accept reasons for its implementation (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993). Internal resistance to the programme and internal integration has proven a critical barrier to IM implementation in many organisations (Schultz, 2004), and when employees display ambivalence to IM, or false emotions to conform or avoid opprobrium (Küpers, 1998), this may prevent fulfilment of customer expectations, damaging brand image (Gounaris, 2008). Ahmed et al (2003) paid attention

to overcoming such resistance, describing eleven controllable elements internal to the organisation which may be utilised for employee motivation and to encourage customer-orientation – the IM Mix – although this drew heavily upon an earlier model of organisational influence structures (Galpin, 1997) designed to comment upon new businesses. Lings (2004) expanded this framework in trying to delineate IM. Employee resistance to IM may not be wilful. Harris & De Chernatony (2001) identified lack of training or ignorance of the IM programme as one cause of unconscious employee non-adherence to desired organisational practices, whilst Harris & Ogbonna (1999) considered certain employees more risk-averse, fearful of change or disinclined towards the concept of market orientation – perhaps due to a fear of losing status or political power (Harris, 2002).

Schultz (1996) believed IM had been declining since the internet bubble of the early 1990s, although it was unclear whether this was due to changing priorities, shifts in managerial philosophy or budgetary issues. A decade on, Gounaris (2006; 2008) opined that IM had yet to gain widespread acceptance in organisations, citing a lack of IM perspective within organisational cultures, and contradicting several key articles addressing this issue (e.g. – Rafiq & Ahmed, 2003; Papasolomou-Doukakis & Kitchen, 2004). His IM definition focused on describing its adoption by organisations. Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) proposed that, to prevent IM being impeded by negative misperceptions, exact, prescriptive lists are needed of what constitutes IM.

Voima (2001) was particularly critical of the transposing of external market strategies and techniques into IM, saying this neglected to recognise differences in dynamics between the two markets (such as the internal customer's relative inability to reject a product offering). In this criticism, Voima (2001) echoed Narver & Slater's (1990) concern that IM intelligence should not be derived solely from external market data, and those of

Deshpande et al (1993), who wished other stakeholders' needs to be addressed. Rafiq & Ahmed (1993) potentially extended the IM remit by considering distributors and suppliers within the internal market. Therefore, Lings' (2004) comment, that previous literature had paid scant regard to IM considerations of market orientation, seems overstated. Hales (1994) was critical of IM manipulating employees, whilst Voima (2000) described IM's role in creating, nurturing and terminating internal relationships. Although this description has attracted criticism as distorted (Anosike, 2008), there appears no impediment to IM making the organisation less attractive to employees deemed undesirable. The concept of ID (Vasconcelos, 2008) will be explored in more depth in chapter 8.

2.9) Internal and external customers and markets, orientation and primacy

IM encourages external customer orientation amongst employees and within the organisational culture (Ahmed & Rafiq, 1995), achieving enhanced customer satisfaction (Berry, 1981; 1984). Piercy (1995; 1996) posited that an organisation's IM strategy would need regular adjustment to ensure equilibrium between internal and external customer satisfaction. Smith (1997) defined customers as individuals or groups who pay for services or products. Moreover, De Bussy et al (2003) suggested IM should exert control over stakeholder needs to fulfil internal exchange relationship requirements, recognising similarities between external and IM exchanges (Sasser & Arbeit, 1976). As any service can only be tolerated by customers down to a certain quality level, due to environmental factors and considerations like exit barriers (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2003), IM is critical to customer and employee retention. Kotler, Bowen & Makens (2013) believed IM's key contribution to be recruiting and developing staff who may serve external customers well, although Piercy (1995; 1996) advised more balance towards the issue of internal/external customer primacy.

Whilst Foreman & Money (1995) suggested the word 'customer' be used metaphorically to identify individual employees and their organisational units, most IM theorists have taken the term more literally within the context of an internal customer value delivery process (e.g. – Tansuhaj, Wong & McCullough, 1987; Berry, Conant & Parasuraman, 1991; Hartline, Maxham & McKee, 2000; Kennedy, Goolsby & Lassk, 2002). Gummesson (1987) expected all individuals to self-identify as customers of their colleagues, and asserted that, until the customer was satisfied, the job function had not been undertaken properly. Berry (1981; 1984) was adamant that organisations treat employees as internal customers, jobs as internal products and the internal environment as the internal marketplace - a concept embraced by Gummesson (1987), although Ahmed & Rafiq (1993; 2002) found it problematic due to the employee's lack of choice in whether to adopt a product. Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) preferred the concept of 'internal customers' to 'employee as customer', believing IM geared towards organisational outcomes rather than trying to shift the balance of power internally, whilst Mudie (2003) perceived 'employees as customers' in any form as undermining employee identity and the traditional, reciprocal exchange relationship between organisations and employees.

Brooks et al (1999) envisaged an internal marketplace of internal customers and suppliers, and Barnes, Fox & Morris (2004) considered the internal customer supply chain underpinned by IM. As Lings (1999) noted, internal customers may have multiple suppliers, or may themselves be suppliers of multiple customers, with a multiplicity of interaction episodes taking place (Hwang, 2005). It is elsewhere argued (e.g. – Gwinner, Gremler & Bitner, 1998) that internal customers' needs should be fulfilled before those of external customers can be addressed, and that to do this, organisations must have thorough awareness of internal issues like job domains, training, empowerment and communication, pay and working conditions, and be willing to act. Grönroos (1981) maintained that the external customer should have primacy, implying this was necessary

for employees to adopt customer-orientation, although he believed every stakeholder has rights to be upheld in strategy design. Whilst Ahmed et al's (2003) adaption of Galpin's (1997) model lacked detail on how the organisation would create employee value, Frost & Kumar's (2000) adaption of SERVQUAL (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990) to the interactions between boundary personnel and their internal suppliers bore this issue in mind.

Sasser & Arbeit (1976) considered Internal Market Exchange central to IM, whilst Grönroos (1985) believed that the internal market of employees could be reoriented towards meeting external customers' needs. In showing that employees have customers and suppliers (e.g. – Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler (2012), IM drives value exchange between employees and the organisation (George, 1990), but also amongst employees (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2003). Grönroos linked the external and internal markets and marketing function pyramidally, although it remains unclear how this influences value exchange interpersonally. Money & Foreman (1996) suggested products be marketed first to employees, then to the external market, to test the product before launch and encourage employee buy-in, demonstrate employee empowerment and perhaps democratisation. Moreover, Grönroos (1985) wished for the organisation's marketing competencies to be fed by individual employee competences – although here, the external customer is intended as the main beneficiary. Lings (2004) and Gounaris (2006) saw Internal Market Orientation (IMO) as a measurement construct usable within IM to build and gauge employer-employee relationship efficacy, although the qualitative nature of such relationships may hinder quantification.

When Lings (2004) expanded Narver & Slater's (1990) construct conceptualising IMO, he divided it into categories named Internal Market Research, Communications and Response. The purpose of Internal Market Research was to inform value exchange

strategies, identify employee market conditions, segment the internal market and formulate strategies for each segment. Therefore, the organisation may tailor its approaches to individual staff. Communications were intended to link management with employees and allow managers to discuss employee needs. Lings' (2004) conceptualisation of IMO seems unnecessarily narrowed by focusing on Berry (1984) and Grönroos (1985), both of whom concentrated upon IM's influence upon boundary personnel - an approach criticised by several other academics (e.g. – Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Gounaris, 2008) and considered limited by Grönroos (1985). Gounaris' (2006) conceptualisation of IMO also used three categories – Internal Market Intelligence Generation, Internal Intelligence Dissemination and Internal Intelligence Response – all reflecting Ling (2004), whereas Kohli & Jaworski (1993) identified in their model the behaviours necessary to create customer value. The description of IMO most commonly expounded is perhaps Gounaris' (2006; 2008) conceptualisation of it as a conduit to management-employee relationship building in the internal environment, influencing the external delivery process, and creating external customer value to gain a competitive advantage over those purely externally-focussed companies.

As introduced earlier, one debate in IM literature concerns the level of primacy afforded to external and internal markets. Berry (1981, p.34) diverged from previous commentators by introducing the idea not just of the 'employee as customer', but the 'employee as internal customer', allowing the conceptualisation of employees within IM to be more specific. The concept of 'employee as customer' gained traction due to widespread acceptance that satisfied workforces would generate satisfied external customers and improved organisational performances (e.g. – Day & Wensley, 1983; Quester & Kelly, 1999). Bell et al (2004) questioned the effectiveness of transposing external marketing activities into the internal environment, whilst Gummesson (1987) and Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) thought the notion of internal customers needed refinement, being influenced by employee and

organisational performance and the contractual obligations inherent in such relationships. Hales (1994, p.52) was far more critical, calling the concept of internal customers “*an exploitation of the customers’ relationship with the organisation*”. Rafiq & Ahmed (1993) rejected internal customer primacy, considering the organisation’s *raison d’être* external customers, who normally fund the organisation through payment for services and goods.

2.10) Transactions and service

As IM casts employees as supplier and customer, transactions are the organisational encounters between internal suppliers and internal customers (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993) – each attracting transaction costs (Ouchi, 1980) which reassure each partner that the expectation of value given and received is matched (Pitt & Foreman, 1999). Transactions in the internal market involve time, effort and emotions (Ouchi, 1980). Hewitt (1991) identified what he considered a symbolic interactionist perspective within Services Marketing, based upon role theory, believing managers understand their roles and remits based upon perceptions of what behaviour they believe is expected of them by others, and act accordingly.

Service has been defined as actions (Kasper, Van Helsingden & Gabbott, 2006; Wilson et al, 2012), interaction outcomes (Silvestro & Johnson, 1990), performances (Kotler & Keller, 2006) and a process (Grönroos, 2000). Its contextualisation as a process stresses the importance of resources, including people, in providing solutions to customer problems through interactions (or service encounters) (Grönroos, 2000), whilst the performativity proposed by Kotler & Keller (2006) seems influenced by ideas within Service-Dominant Logic (e.g. – Vargo & Lusch, 2004), and certainly Shostack’s (1977) call for marketers to free themselves from selling physical products, concentrating on intangibles. Many academics (e.g. – Bebeko, 2000; Grönroos, 2000; Kotler & Keller, 2006)

describe service as intangible, variable, perishable and inseparable. Silvestro & Johnson's (1990) focus on the value emanating from interactions between customer and organisation – or boundary personnel and supporting resources (Silvestro, Johnston, Fitzgerald & Voss, 1990) – pre-empts ideas within Co-Creation literature (e.g. – Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

Levitt (1972) had commented that customer service should be individualised and targeted at individuals' specific needs and wants. Broad consideration was given to service characteristics. Svensson (2006) observed that inseparability leads a service to influence both provider and customer, and that its perishability means it must be produced and consumed, and its value transmitted, at the point of interaction between service provider and customer, which was reinforced by Grönroos (2007). Service has been identified as intangible (e.g. – Bebko, 2000; Olorunniwo, Hsu & Udo, 2006), or an interaction for dealing with an intangible (Grönroos, 2000). In defining service dimensions, Cook & Thompson (2000) and Jiang, Klein & Crampton (2000) noted that, as the service context changes, so may the service dimension, especially in its supply and demand characteristics. Lovelock & Wirtz's (2002) recommendation, that organisations gain competitive advantage through innovative new services, seems more achievable in a changing environment, and Greene et al (1994) offer IM as an enabler of this superior service. Hewitt (1991) understood the situational aspect of service, but his explanation focused specifically on the interplay between various actors, whilst Stryker & Statham (1985) also explored the interdependence and positionality of actors. Svensson (2006) posited that the production and consumption of service – and the interaction between service provider and receiver – construct roles. Therefore, to define desired service provider behaviours during a service encounter, an IM strategy should also identify likely actions and characteristics of service recipients, and the role they are expected to perform. This provides an opportunity to interrogate literature on CM which studies issues

like domain dissensus, generating new insights into the dyadic nature of the service encounter.

During service encounters, customers and service providers construct their roles within the context of the specific situation in which the encounter occurs and, to be successful, these roles are well-defined (Czepiel et al, 1985; Guirguis & Chewning, 2005) to reduce domain dissensus. Within such encounters, managers adapt their organisations' service offerings to fit requirements in a bespoke manner. Therefore, service may differ from one boundary personnel or department to another within one organisation, and this is not necessarily indicative of non-adherence to the organisation's IM policy (Marshall, Baker & Finn, 1998). George & Grönroos (1989) considered the service-mindedness of the service provider pivotal to service encounter success. Miles, Hatfield & Huseman (1991) argued that the benefits deemed important to internal exchange by Sasser & Arbeit (1976), like remuneration and other conditions of employment, are similarly important to the external exchange, the level of boundary personnel motivation and satisfaction, and hence the quality of the encounter and service delivered.

2.11) Internal service encounters, internal exchanges and service quality

Yang & Coates (2010) posed three questions regarding internal service: how is the quality of internal service encounters constructed? What do customers expect of service? And how do managers address these expectations? Despite identifying a need for dyadic perspectives in IM literature, and posing the first and third of these questions from both service provider and customer standpoint, their focus on customer expectations of service largely neglected the service provider's expectations. Perhaps key to understanding service expectations is understanding the context in which the service takes place (i.e. – its situational nature) (Hewitt, 1991). Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler (2003) assisted in this by

categorising service encounters as follows: (i) 'recovery' service encounters entail an employee responding to failure within the service delivery system or process; (ii) 'adaptability' service encounters are those where an employee addresses customer needs or demand; (iii) 'spontaneity' service encounters are unrequested, unplanned and unexpected by the customer; (iv) 'coping' service encounters occur when employees respond to difficulties generated by a customer. Although these categories are potentially very useful as springboards to ascertain if different types of service encounters have different needs, outcomes and expectations, they have not been tested in the IM literature entirely within the internal environment, but have been restricted to studies of value exchange interactions across organisational boundaries. Albrecht (1998) rejected outright the notion of classifying services and their encounters, arguing that each one should be bespoke to its application (and situation). In contrast, Strauss (1996) argued that the differentiability of service, fuelled by supply and demand considerations, provided justification for categorising them, and Sayles (1964) and Davis (2001) agreed that services should be identified with a specific category.

Sayles (1964) proposed that internal service fall into two themes – those 'workflow relationships' developed in completing a task, and those 'service relationships' feeding alliances between groups within an organisation. Grönroos' (2007) Service Marketing Triangle asserted that company-customer service encounters (external marketing), employee-customer encounters (interactive marketing) and company-employee encounters (IM) should share the same organisational objectives. Kang, James & Alexandris (2002) divided internal service encounters into three sub-categories – those between boundary personnel and managers, boundary personnel and support staff, and between support staff and managers – maintaining that each would have different characteristics. Describing internal service encounters specifically, Reynoso & Moores (1995) advised practitioners to tailor each encounter to its situation. Davis (2001) had

previously attempted to categorise types of internal service situation as routinised workflow, support service (to the workflow) and audit or evaluative services, which was the only of three categories considered specific to individual customer needs. This theory understood Sayles' (1964) allocation of internal service patterns as four types: (i) auditing relationships, which help to evaluate or monitor another relationship; (ii) advisory relationships, which provide specialist advice; (iii) stabilisation relationships, to maintain the status quo during periods of flux; and (iv) innovation relationships, to produce new knowledge and insights to capitalise upon emerging opportunities. As neglecting to understand the situation hinders service interaction and impedes understanding of actors' roles, behaviours and possible outcomes (McHugh, 1968), Shostack (1985) warned that practitioners should consider the differences between remote, phone and face-to-face encounters – which include the availability or otherwise of non-verbal cues – whilst Wilson et al (2012) observed that this issue had become more widespread in recent years due to increased use of telecommunications, although they did not explore in detail how the choice of encounter type influences the effectiveness of IM. Despite the prominence of these articles, researchers still described service encounters in terms of person-to-person (Svensson, 2006; Gremler, Bitner & Evans, 1995) or face-to-face (Svensson, 2006; Matsson, 1994) interaction between service provider and customer, whereas Shostack (1985) described the process of interaction between a customer and the service rather than with the service provider.

As already noted, IM has been criticised for potentially leading employees to suppress their true beliefs and emotions (e.g. – Hochschild, 2003), and Küpers (1998) believed that this could be deleterious during interpersonal exchange, with the relational patterns of genuine exchanges being altered or misperceived, perhaps leading to mutual distrust or negativity. Ahmed & Rafiq (2003) placed the management of interactions within the organisation as a central principle of IM, but it is unclear to what degree practitioners

respect individuals' right to their own beliefs whilst striving to get them 'on-message'. Ahmed & Rafiq (2003) realised that IM depends upon information and meanings transmitted between individuals during interpersonal interactions (and organisation-employee interactions), with those values and activities common to all interactions within an organisation identified and harnessed using marketing behaviours, enhancing social processes (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). Mudie (2003) was more critical of the notion of internal exchanges, deeming them implausible, as employees' working lives are influenced by evolving structures and procedures, whereas De Bussy, Ewing & Pitt (2003) considered internal exchanges more easily controlled by the organisation if it seeks to capitalise upon stakeholder needs. Surprenant & Solomon (1987, p.86) stated that managing service entails managing the service encounter, due to it being a "*dyadic interaction between a customer and a service provider*" but, as with Yang & Coates (2010), their identification of the dyadic nature of service encounters failed to lead them to investigate the applicability to IM of theories from channel literature.

An internal network of exchange relationships may be constructed and nurtured by IM for knowledge renewal within an organisation (Ballantyne, 1997; 2000), and the exchange logic underpinning understanding of product and service purchases is transferable into the internal market, informing research on how employees seek fulfilling employment (e.g. – Berry, 1981; Collins & Payne, 1991). Therefore, if one is to understand the shift in marketing from selling product to external customers in a transactional manner to offering product-service systems through the servitization of exchange (Vandermerwe & Rada, 1989), one may identify which service quality dimensions may belong to this new paradigm in the internal market when viewed through the lens of SERVQUAL (Zeithaml et al, 1990) and the Nordic Model (Grönroos, 1985). Yang & Coates (2010) proposed nine such dimensions covering the areas of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, communication, consideration, fairness, recognition and flexibility.

Although delivery of consistently high service quality internally is facilitated by IM, and may satisfy the needs and wants of internal customers whilst addressing organisational objectives (Berry, 1981), service quality remains an elusive, highly subjective concept, formed not only by the service itself, but also by the customer attitude towards, and perception of, that service (Parasuraman, 1998; Pakdil & Aydin, 2007) – justification for undertaking bottom-up research to add the internal customer's perspective to those of managers. As the internal service encounter is jointly created by organisation and internal customer (through what may be deemed co-creation of value), Svensson (2006) argues that service quality is heavily influenced by service provider characteristics and qualities. Jayawardhena, Souchon, Farrell & Glanville (2007) reiterate the importance of service variability – it can never be replicated exactly in a subsequent delivery, and the quality is dependent on who provides it, when, where, how and to whom.

The measurement of service quality is prominent in IM literature, perhaps because excellent service quality gives an organisation significant competitive advantage and commoditises its brand (Strydom, 2005). SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al, 1988) has been the most widely discussed model for gauging service quality (e.g. – Brooks, Lings & Botschen, 1999; Frost & Kumar, 2000; Lings, 2000), focusing on the following aspects of service: (i) reliability – its ability to deliver promised service levels consistently; (ii) responsiveness – its ability to assist customers promptly and commensurately to their needs and wants; (iii) assurance – its ability, through the qualities of employees delivering it, to build trust and confidence; (iv) empathy – its ability to be attentive to customers in an individualised, caring and sympathetic manner; (v) tangibility – the appearance (or otherwise) of the machinery and materials which assist in the service delivery. Across these five dimensions, SERVQUAL gauges the gaps between customer expectations and

perceptions of a service delivery and remains useful for researchers across several contexts (Bogomolova, Romaniuk & Sharp, 2009).

Grönroos (2007) suggested that the needs and characteristics of specific industries, customer groups and environments lend more criticality to certain dimensions, and that there may be determinants of high service quality which were overlooked or omitted by SERVQUAL. Cook & Thompson (2000) and Jiang et al (2000) raised concerns over the stability of the five dimensions, questioning their representativeness and possible dependence on the service context. Carman (1990) believed the dimensions sector-specific, whereas Buttle (1996) and Gilmore & McMullan (2009) considered certain dimensions inappropriate. Grönroos' (2007) Nordic Model of Service Quality has been the most widely discussed alternative, concentrating on the following seven criteria for judging perceived service quality: (i) the professionalism, attributes and skills of those delivering the service; (ii) behaviours and attitudes present in the delivery, and in the wider organisation; (iii) the accessibility of the service to customers and its flexibility to meet their requirements; (iv) the reliability and trustworthiness of the service and the actors involved in its creation and provision; (v) the ease with which service recovery takes place to rectify problems; (vi) the 'servicescape' (Bitner, 1992) or environment in which the service takes place; (vii) the reputation and credibility which the service has garnered amongst customers.

Expanding upon the seven dimensions of the Nordic Model, Grönroos (2007) explained that: (i) professionalism is a criterium directly related to an outcome, as customers' cognisance of the resources, attitudes and skills being mobilised for them influence their levels of satisfaction; (ii) a contact person's attitudes and behaviour can individualise the service, building interactivity across the organisational boundary (or, in an IM context, interfunctionally or interpersonally), indirectly leading to customer satisfaction and

therefore a process-linked criteria; (iii) for a customer to feel that the service is accessible, they must perceive that the service provider tailors the offering specifically to their requirements (which may be said to correspond with the concept of 'idiosyncratic investments' (Anderson & Weitz, 1992) in CM literature); (iv) reliability and trustworthiness assure customers that actions taken by boundary personnel are agreed with the customer and sanctioned by the organisation, so promises will be honoured and the service provider will act with integrity on behalf of the customer; (v) service recovery satisfies customers that appropriate remedial action will be taken to address any problems (although one may argue that a customer may not be aware of the robustness of this aspect until after a commitment to buy or interact has taken place); (vi) the notion of a servicescape fits Hewitt's (1991) idea of services being influenced by the contexts in which they occur, but Grönroos' (2007) explanation also seems to lean towards the idea of 'Physical Evidence' or Bitner's (1990) explanation of how environment influences interpersonal interaction by reinforcing perceptions of service quality to be delivered; (vii) reputation and credibility - perhaps more important now than when the model was first proposed, because of the speed and proliferation of e-WOM communications and their influence on brand perception and decision making (e.g. – Filieri & McLeay, 2014) - help inspire trust and transmit shared values between the organisation and the customer.

Both SERVQUAL and the Nordic Model gauge service quality from the perspective of the service receiver, significantly adding to knowledge found in previous organisation-focused work but largely ignoring the fact that service may be constructed collaboratively by service provider and 'customer' (e.g. – Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) and that the service encounter is dyadic in nature (Yang & Coates, 2010). Whilst SERVQUAL has been applied repeatedly to the internal market (e.g. – Frost & Kumar, 2000; Lings, 2000), the use of Nordic in IM is neglected until Yang & Coates (2010). Outside these two predominant models, service quality has been stated to comprise dimensions as diverse

as corporate image (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1982) and, in the case of customer perceived service quality, customer expectations and perceptions of service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1998). Yang & Coates (2010) tested service quality specifically within the internal market, by gauging quality across the following 20 dimensions: (i) assistance; (ii) caring; (iii) competence; (iv) consideration; (v) communication; (vi) credibility; (vii) defending; (viii) encouragement; (ix) explanation; (x) empathy; (xi) fairness; (xii) flexibility; (xiii) listening; (xiv) professionalism; (xv) responsiveness; (xvi) recognition; (xvii) reliability; (xviii) security; (xix) sympathy; and (xx) understanding.

2.12) Satisfaction and motivation

Kotler, Bowen & Makens (2013) considered IM to deliver customer and employee satisfaction (George, 1970; Grönroos, 1985). Several studies argued that customer-contact employee satisfaction levels positively and significantly impact upon customer satisfaction (e.g. – Berry, 1981; Hales, 1994; Barnes & Morris, 2000; Hogg & Carter, 2000; Liu & Chen, 2006). Zeithaml et al (1988) and Bitner et al (1990) noted direct links between employee and customer satisfaction levels, and the levels of consideration by employers towards employees' and customers' satisfaction levels, whilst Berry (1981) argued that internal customers must be convinced of the service quality being delivered externally, and contented in their roles, to give effective customer service which builds customer satisfaction. Berry & Parasuraman (1991) attempted to analyse and define the elements of customer satisfaction, and although this is potentially useful to practitioners in understanding where customer satisfaction presents itself, those benefits which satisfying employees and staff has on workforce effectiveness (Quester & Kelly, 1999) suggest it would be useful to define the dimensions of employee satisfaction.

Ahmed, Rafiq & Saad (2003) asserted that internal customer satisfaction is cultivated to position organisations to deliver better service and satisfy external customers, and it is argued (e.g. – Gummeson, 1987) that transferral of external marketing activities to the internal market can achieve this. Moreover, using job satisfaction to indicate organisational performance levels is widely recommended (e.g. – Sasser & Arbeit, 1976; Brown & McIntosh, 2003; Varey, 1995; Lings & Greenley, 2005; Gounaris, 2006).

As previously discussed, treatment of job and employee satisfaction within IM literature is more diffused than that of customer or non-specific satisfaction, their dimensions usually discussed piecemeal. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a positive emotional state arising from the employee's appraisal of their job experiences, whilst Spector (1985) considered it the extent to which an employee gained satisfaction from their work. An ageing concept, job satisfaction has elsewhere been understood as an emotional reaction to employment (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969) and an emotional state derived from one's sense of achievement through work (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). IM can produce job satisfaction (Berry et al, 1976), perhaps most directly by treating employees as customers (Bak, Vogt, George & Greentree, 1994) and jobs as internal products (Berry, 1984), placing these strategies central to the organisation's approach to meeting its objectives (Goldsmith, 1996; Maignan, Ferrell & Hult, 1999). Likewise, although IM has been seen to generate commitment by transmitting value through internal exchanges and communication between the organisation and employees (George, 1990), directing this employee commitment towards organisational programmes (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003), there has been little synthesis between the extensive literature on OC and the role of commitment within IM literature.

The ability of IM to motivate staff towards service-mindedness or customer-orientation through marketing-like approaches internal to the organisation has long been recognised

(e.g. – Grönroos, 1985; George & Grönroos, 1989; Quester & Kelly, 1999). Thompson et al (1978) stated that the attraction, retention and motivation of outstanding employees is fundamental to organisational success, especially to those differentiating themselves through service quality, whilst Kotler & Armstrong (2013) suggested that building customer orientation through training employees to offer good customer service brings employee motivation, and is produced by it. Flipo (1986) and Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) considered the core benefit of motivating staff through IM to be their alignment with organisational objectives and programmes. Whilst Varey (1995) believed the philosophy of IM both motivational and supportive of staff, Bell et al (2004) found a significant relationship between the support levels given by managers and supervisors, and employees' motivation to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities.

IM is important in recruiting quality personnel to provide a competitive advantage (Guest, 1997), and, through integration and coordination of functions like Marketing and Human Resources, a significant minority of IM studies perceive HRM as a resource tool for managing organisation-employee relationships (e.g. – Berry, 1984; George, 1990; Collins & Payne, 1991; Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Glassman & McAfee, 1992) – something fiercely contested by Hales (1994). Collins & Payne (1991) believed the only ways organisations could retain their best talent is by making roles more fulfilling, boosting pay and conditions, empowering workers, providing training and a career progression path, and through motivation packages and IM initiatives. However, the effect of external environmental factors, such as the strength of the job market, were considered less.

Developing job roles which fulfil the needs of employees requires the organisation to meet the financial and social wants and needs of staff (Lings & Greenley, 2005). Gounaris (2008) commented that empowered employees become satisfied and promote the image of the organisation and its services, but did not clarify how the empowerment construct

was composed, potentially leaving his IMO definition unreliable, as 'empowerment' could be either relational or motivational in nature (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Indeed, it would be dangerous to link IM solely with the organisational construct of motivation, when it appears equally linked to support, reward, empowerment and other factors. Empowerment is particularly beneficial in allowing responsiveness and speed of service retrieval, which then impacts positively on profitability and customer satisfaction (Tansuhaj et al, 1987; Lings, 2004; Papasolomou & Vrontis, 2006; Gounaris, 2008).

Hales (1994) criticised what many IM academics deem the basis for empowerment – the feeding back of information from employees to their superiors – as he believed that simply feeding back knowledge without communicating their aspirations would be demotivational. Pitt & Foreman (1999) also recognised that IM could bring employee costs in the higher degree of affinity to their organisation being demanded, but argued that this was compensated by better remuneration, increased job satisfaction and greater benefits, whilst O'Toole & Donaldson (2002) thought the motivation provided by IM sufficiently worthwhile in terms of increased service quality and customer satisfaction to merit the costs incurred. Despite many articles acknowledging IM's role in engendering interfunctionality and speaking to all internal stakeholders rather than isolated employees and groups (e.g. – Berry, 1984; Grönroos, 1985; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000; Schultz, 2004), the main benefit derived from this is usually understood as the facilitation of knowledge transfer and innovation and dismantling of silos, rather than psychological benefits gained by individuals in seeing the big picture, gaining greater holistic role awareness and interacting less bureaucratically with cross-functional colleagues – and this perhaps indicates IM being theorised from a more microeconomic and positivist, less sociological and interpretivist, standpoint.

2.13) Relationships and communication, customer orientation and boundary personnel

The outcomes of relationships within organisations, and between organisations and external customers, depend upon a mix of actions, so IM strategies should identify the level of importance attached to each task and facilitate a commensurate level of action – for this reason, IM is often implemented through relational approaches (Bell et al, 2004), with relational network quality critical to the development of quality relationships inside the organisation (Grönroos, 1985; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; Pitt & Foreman, 1999; Voima, 2000; Ballantyne, 2003; Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2006).

If a key objective of IM is managing internal relationships (e.g. – Gummesson, 1987; Piercy & Morgan, 1991; Voima, 2000). It may achieve this by building an appreciation of the wants and needs of internal stakeholders (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003), and by fostering quality networks between staff members to create value (Bell et al, 2004). However, the emerging, undeveloped concept of ID (Vasconcelos, 2008) is appraised later in the review of the literature. Although the building of relationships encourages collaboration, they also assist the exchange and communication of knowledge (Ballantyne, 2003). Such knowledge is transferred by internal exchange (Berry, 1981; Collins & Payne, 1991), with IM managing the relationships where internal exchanges occur (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). Exchanges may be hierarchical, or network exchanges occurring spontaneously amongst informal networks (Ballantyne, 2003). Rafiq & Ahmed (2003) warned that, to understand exchanges within relationships, one must understand coercion levels inherent in producing them, whilst Day & Wensley (1983) considered exchange dependent upon internal exchange. However, the consensus is that value transfer is the key motivation of any marketing exchange.

IM motivates employees to be customer-conscious (Grönroos, 1981), instilling a customer perspective (Despahr et al, 1993). Customer orientation is usually considered interchangeable with market orientation (Hartline, Maxham & McKee, 2000; Brady & Cronin, 2001) and the 'customer first' ideal (Shapiro, 1988; Webster, 1992), although some academics propose similar levels of primacy between internal and external customers (e.g. – Piercy, 1996). Grönroos (1985) considered customer orientation interchangeable with customer consciousness. It entails increasing profitability (Despahr, Farley & Webster, 1993), by considering the customer without alienating other publics, and is transmitted behaviourally by the inherent organisational culture (Narver & Slater, 1990). Liu & Chen (2006) believed the key to improving customer consciousness a focus on customer-contact employees, whilst elsewhere the importance has been discussed of salespeople having satisfactory interactions with customers by addressing their needs and helping their decision-making processes without applying pressure (Saxe & Weitz, 1982), and focusing on relational goals rather than monthly targets (Dunlap, Dotson & Chambers, 1988). Through its role in orienting employees towards customers (Johnson & Seymour, 1985), IM may generate market intelligence (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990), deliver a more market oriented management framework (Varey, 1995), influence customer and organisational decision making (Shapiro, 1988), and convince employees of customer service benefits (Varey, 1995).

Whilst Ahmed et al (2003) stipulate that customer and market orientation, as two separate dimensions, and employee satisfaction help IM to improve organisational performance, the linkages between them - unlikely to occur in isolation - are unexplained. By separating customer and market orientation, they contradict Narver & Slater (1990) and Kohli & Jaworski (1993), who asserted that the former is a component of the latter. Berry (1981) and De Bussy et al (2003) believed that satisfying employee needs helped organisations satisfy customer needs, although this is contested elsewhere. Kotler & Armstrong (2013)

recommended the training and motivation of boundary personnel and support staff to achieve customer orientation, and Cahill (1995) thought those employees treating colleagues as customers more likely to provide quality external customer service and be customer oriented. Liao et al (2004) believed that customer orientation could be encouraged by organisational management of internal interactive activities to create a more efficient internal environment, in which customer-consciousness flows through the personnel function (Caruana & Calleya, 1998). The advantages of long-term customer orientation are widely considered advantageous to customers and employees in reducing conflict and stress (Kelley, 1992).

Numerous theorists (e.g. – Sasser & Arbeit, 1976) have claimed that organisations should market job products to employees to sell their services and goods to external customers. Perhaps the most beneficial employees to target are boundary personnel, because any misunderstanding on their part over the benefits of the company's programmes may make them uncertain over their remit during process implementation (Grönroos, 1981). Boundary personnel satisfaction levels are often influenced by the quality of encounters with internal service providers (Gremler, Bitner & Evans, 1995; Gounaris, 2006), whereas the quality of encounters between these employees and external customers may determine organisational success (Lovelock, 1996), as buyer-seller interactions are important conduits to commercial opportunities (Grönroos, 1985) and service employee to customer interaction is critical for successful service delivery (Kasper, Van Helsdingen & De Vries, 1999).

The behaviours of boundary personnel influence external service delivery (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996), so it appears logical that the behaviours of colleagues during internal exchange encounters may influence internal service delivery, and that organisations should dedicate resources to managing them (Day & Wensley, 1983; Grönroos, 1985;

Collins & Payne, 1991). Moreover, if external customers' relationships with employees help shape their perceptions of brand values (Papazolomou & Vrontis, 2006), then this too may be the case for internal customers. IM applies Marketing approaches to customer-facing staff (Greene et al, 1994), ideally with managers equally devoted to the care of jobs as to other goods, products and services (Sasser & Arbeit, 1976), and IM best practice is for organisations to inform employees of strategies and policies before informing customers, ensuring they understand and implement them for the benefit of organisation and customer (Grönroos, 1981).

2.14) Measuring and operationalising Internal Marketing

Changes in employee performance arising from IM are crucial to organisations (Berry, 1984), especially when designed to enhance market performance (Bekkers & van Haastrecht, 1993). Whilst it is difficult to isolate the commercial improvements directly attributable to IM, several studies have endeavoured to design an IM construct quantifying customer value and the resulting organisational performance enhancements (e.g. – Piercy & Morgan, 1990; Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2008) - Gounaris (2008) attempted to synthesise beliefs and behaviours arising from marketing. When Mudie (2003) asserted that an organisation's IM success is dependent upon the level of legitimacy which stakeholders perceived it to have, this was not expanded by researching multiple perspectives or clarifying the nature of legitimacy. IM influences several dependent variables, such as employee motivation (Berry et al, 1976), and its outcomes are influenced by multiple actors and relationships (Gummesson, 1987; Bell et al, 2004), suggesting that IM metrics be spread across many areas of organisational activity. To this end, Gounaris (2008) requested a holistic approach to IM measurement, whilst Varey (1995) proposed that surveys assist informed decision making where data have been harvested from across the spectrum of employees, arguing that to depend entirely on the views of managers and decision makers would risk capturing an unrepresentatively inward-focused perspective.

In attempting to operationalise IM - and decide how an essentially unquantifiable sphere of influence could be measured by observing changes to those areas on which it acts – several researchers have abandoned the notion of an internal market with internal customers (e.g. – Ahmed et al, 2003; Gounaris, 2008), although it is unclear what drove this change. It may be argued that there is a distance between academic IM studies and practical IM, leaving a paucity of advice for practitioners to use when deciding how to measure IM effectiveness. Likewise, there is little instruction for practitioners when implementing IM to ensure it works effectively (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003), this being exacerbated as theorists have moved away from attempting to measure elements of the process in which the marketing mix is adapted to the internal market, to steps within the adoption of an IMO (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990). Although Ahmed et al (2003) wrote of gauging the business competencies which link IM and organisational performance to operationalise IM, the factors measured are relatively unquantifiable and conceptual.

Whilst Tansuhaj et al (1991) commented that IM is implemented in organisations mainly by marketing experts, Grönroos (1985) stated that it could be implemented at strategic or tactical levels by managers and staff at varying hierarchical levels. Lings (2004) described IM implementation as chaotic, and Ahmed et al (2003) criticised the scope of previous literature for failing to ascertain what mix of IM programmes should be assembled to implement IM effectively, or even the balance between hard and soft functions targeted at employees, suggesting effective theoretical models are required to guide the effective operationalisation of IM and address those issues which improve implementation processes. This is a potentially serious flaw, especially within services organisations, as each element of the IM mix provides cues to customers which shape their perceptions of the organisation's image and quality (Mudie & Pirrie, 2012).

Ahmed et al (2003), Lings (2004) and Gounaris (2006; 2008) analysed the operationalisation of IM – Lings (2004) by adapting a Marketing Orientation construct from Narver & Slater (1990), whilst Ahmed et al's (2003) exploration of IM's operationalisation was more tentative and less prescriptive than most IM literature (Pitt & Foreman, 1999; Mudie, 2003). Gounaris (2006) suggested that companies should operationalise IM through harvesting internal market intelligence, interpreting and redistributing it amongst employees and management, and using it to design new strategies –enhancing organisational ability, the internal market product and service design and delivery (Collins & Payne, 1991; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; Varey, 1995).

2.15) Limitations of the Internal Marketing literature and opportunities for further research

Ahmed & Rafiq (2003) highlighted a lack of research into the domain of IM, voicing their concerns that debate was unresolved over what IM constitutes, how it should be operationalised as a managerial strategy and as a field of academic research. They were critical of the paucity of empirical, case-based investigation into IM effectiveness, stating that most articles had focused on its adoption to the neglect of these, and of the lack of consideration given to how IM should dovetail into the wider strategic landscape of organisations to contribute to overall commercial and transformational objectives. They suggested as a reason for these deficiencies the fact that IM can be difficult to research as it requires knowledge not just of marketing, but also of HRM and ideally of organisational studies.

Lings (2004) and Gounaris (2008) both attempted to tie IM to market research carried out internally to the organisation, and to internal exchange, but they suggested the value of this research was to address competitive issues in the external environment, rather than

for any integrative function internally, leaving IM's potential only partially explored. This led Ahmed & Rafiq (2003), Schultz (2004) and Anosike & Ahmed (2009) to recommend more holistic IM research to clarify its organisational potential, and explore practitioners' perspectives through phenomenological research, producing new insights to help practitioners implement IM (Anosike, Ehrich & Ahmed, 2012). Although Anosike & Ahmed (2009) have partially addressed this by exploring the manager's viewpoint, the literature continues to overlook the experiences of those who may be considered 'receivers' of, or junior participants within, IM programmes. Therefore, bottom-up and multi-perspective research is required. This is especially true when considering Yang & Coates' (2010) call for scrutiny of dyadic perspectives in IM research – although they subsequently adopted one, it was predominantly vertical, with little consideration of how IM is transmitted and received between different hierarchical levels. Moreover, the article did not draw directly upon dyadic perspectives available in other areas of marketing literature – notably CM literature, and those concepts regarding the mutual adding of value by two parties arising from co-creation literature (e.g. – Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This thesis seeks to utilise those sources.

Ahmed (2004) and Schultz (2006) complained that IM literature was becoming less relevant to practitioners, whilst elsewhere it was noted that the literature included little qualitative inquiry, insufficient phenomenological research, and that the gap between theory and practice was not being bridged (Lings, 2004; Ahmed et al, 2003; Gounaris, 2006). Academics' understanding of the IM concept should build at least partially upon the experiences of practitioners, to be structured, holistic and inclusive (Schultz, 2006). Yang & Coates (2010) suggested that this include research into how value is added to internal service encounters between managers and support staff, and into the influences acting upon internal service, such as interpersonal relationships and the work environment. Ahmed et al (2003) noted a broader lack of work on how IM operates in practice, which

Schultz (2004, p.119) suggested be filled with “end user research”. By far the most popular methodology suggested to provide these missing insights is phenomenological research (e.g. – Küpers, 1998; Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Gibson & Hanes, 2003; Schultz, 2004; Anosike & Ahmed, 2009), not least because actions and activities within organisations derive from interactions by people located in a specific context, which gives meaning to their actions (Küpers, 1998).

Overleaf: Table 1: Gaps in Internal Marketing literature, and how this research addresses them.

Table 1: Gaps in Internal Marketing literature, and how this research addresses them.

Source	Gap	Action
Ahmed & Rafiq (2003)	The constituent parts of IM.	Interview questions to explore what activities are considered part of IM, from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders.
Ahmed & Rafiq (2003)	The operationalisation of IM as managerial strategy.	Interview strategic IM practitioners to define their remits and understanding of IM's role and scope.
Ahmed & Rafiq (2003)	Operationalisation of IM as field of academic research.	Critical appraisal of the extant literature, but re-evaluating in the light of more recent theoretical developments in adjacent fields (e.g. – ID, Co-Creation, S-D Logic).
Ahmed & Rafiq (2003)	Effectiveness of IM to transform business and achieve commercial objectives.	Interview questions to gauge IM's effectiveness in these areas, and stakeholders' perceptions of its effectiveness in these areas, qualitatively.
Ahmed & Rafiq (2003); Schultz (2004); Gounaris, 2006; Anosike & Ahmed (2009).	Practitioner perspectives and relevance / bridging of theory and practice.	By structuring interviews to address issues which practitioner participants raise as areas for concern or exploration.
Küpers (1998)	Phenomenological research into IM.	Through semi-structured interviews.
Lings (2004); Gounaris (2008)	Exploration of issues facilitating or preventing IM's effectiveness as integrative strategy.	Through semi-structured interview questioning.
Yang & Coates (2010)	Dyadic perspectives.	Critical appraisal of dyadic perspectives within CM literature, and introduction of relevant concepts into IM contexts.
Yang & Coates (2010)	Adding of value to manager-staff internal service	Inclusion of interview questions which seek clarification of how stakeholders from either side of

	encounters.	the dyad perceive 'value' in this context.
Yang & Coates (2010)	Influences acting upon internal service encounters.	By ascertaining from participants the contexts in which IM is used and the factors which they consider to be beneficial or detrimental to its success.
Observed by author.	Perspectives of junior staff and 'recipients' of IM strategy.	By using a purposive sampling method to include participants from junior positions, and by democratising the interviews (e.g. – allowing participants choice of direction) to empower participants and represent those hitherto underrepresented in the literature.
Observed by author	The extent to which acceptance of internal or external customer primacy by internal stakeholders is influenced by their perception of external customer commitment and risk, and other factors such as the strength of the job market.	Inclusion interview questions informed by theory appertaining to interdependency, commitment and power from CMs literature.

2.16) Summary of Chapter 2

This chapter has examined the concepts comprising IM, its core philosophy, and those fields of study immediately related to it. The roles intended for IM, and the elements within organisations which make up IM, have been discussed. A full exploration has been undertaken of the aims and potential of IM. It has been noted that IM can focus organisational vision, encapsulating commitment and change, fostering interdepartmental integration and collaboration, and both enhancing and transmitting organisational culture. Whilst its relationship to HRM is contentious to several theorists, its limitations have been critiqued by a much broader range of theorists, including those most supportive of IM. A comparison has been undertaken between internal and external customers and markets, and between the orientations to which organisations give primacy. There too has been an interrogation of the nature of the transactions and service through which IM is conducted and, by extension, internal service encounters, internal exchanges and service quality. The phenomena of satisfaction and motivation have been contextualised within IM, and the importance of relationships, communications, customer orientation and boundary personnel discussed. The struggles which academics and practitioners have encountered in attempting to measure and operationalise IM have been considered, before a more holistic critique of the limitations of IM literature and theory, and opportunities for further research.

The next chapter will explore the concepts and literature which arise from IM – most notably the recent academic debates on Internal Branding, Organisational and Brand Identity, and Brand Orientation – analysing how these expand IM and develop its key themes.

Chapter 3) Concepts Arising from Internal Marketing

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This chapter considers key concepts representing an evolution of IM ideas underpinning this research.

3.1) The relationship between Internal Marketing and Internal Branding

Whilst IM theory has nourished Internal Branding (IB) debates in recent years, IB is often considered more holistic, strategic and therefore legitimate (e.g. – Vallaster & De Chernatony, 2006). However, IB is not simply a continuation of IM and does not render IM obsolete. Nor are the two areas lacking reciprocity. There are significant contradictions concerning what constitutes IB. For instance, although Punjaisri & Wilson (2007) and Foster et al (2010) described IB as integrated and strategic, explaining its role in building corporate brands by communicating to employees core values underpinning the brand and reasons for adopting them, this assumes a top-down imposition of a philosophy on staff who have not necessarily contributed to its design. However, this undermines the assertion of Chong (2007) and Ind & Bjerke (2007) that IB is participatory and dialogical, as does Foster et al's (2010) comment on IB's importance in aligning newly recruited staff to the brand. Brannan et al (2011) cited such external factors as increased staff turnover and outsourcing as impediments to effective staff acculturation to a brand, increasing the burden on IB. Gapp & Merrilees (2006) thought IB more sophisticated and academically mature than IM, seeking to cross interdepartmental boundaries and extend its focus beyond service quality improvement, perhaps underestimating IM's scope. Indeed, whilst criticising IM's supposedly narrow focus, Vallaster & De Chernatony (2006) stated IB's

main concern as the development of Employee Brand Orientation – considered by many theorists part of IM.

Several recent articles have suggested that IB focuses more on corporate values than does IM when communicating the brand (e.g. – Gotsi & Wilson, 2001), and requires greater strategic input than IM to be implemented successfully (e.g. – Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007), though no particular critique of IM's supposed shortcomings substantiates these statements. Whilst several studies have acknowledged the role which Marketing departments can play in managing IB (e.g. – De Chernatony & Cottem, 2006; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2007; Yen-Tsung & Ya-Ting, 2013), they have suggested collaboration with HR departments to support implementation by helping mitigate negative staff perceptions of IB – a secondary role.

IB comprises brand-centred Internal Communications, HRM and Leadership (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005), and is therefore multi-departmental, perhaps suffering lack of 'ownership' if not driven from board level. The Internal Communications must align with core organisational values underpinning the brand (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001), developing and disseminating them (Vallaster & De Chernatony, 2006), and ensuring consistency between formally and informally communicated messages (Quinn & Hargie, 2004; Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012). However, Internal Communications must reflect employees' everyday realities to be persuasive, relevant and underline the organisation's differentiatedness (Mitchell, 2002). Moreover, where core organisational values seem distant from employees' experiences and/or where IM is perceived as manipulative or overbearing by employees, IB is likely to be ineffective if relying solely upon Internal Communications (Murphy & Davey, 2002; Cushen, 2011).

Although IB demands board-level leadership, managers at all levels are crucial in displaying brand-centred behaviours, ensuring they are adopted by subordinates (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Morhart, Herzog & Tomczak (2009), although Cushen (2009) considered their leadership a conduit to IB – especially in fostering Employee Brand Orientation – rather than an element of it. In encouraging and facilitating those behaviours underpinning and uniting a brand, Lencioni (2002) suggested the core values should transcend departments, whilst Mosely (2007) stressed the importance of their consistency and relevance to all employees. Therefore, if IB is to orient employees' behaviours and attitudes to strengthen brand identity (Harris & De Chernatony, 2001), it requires managers with interdepartmental authority who can take a holistic view of the organisation. As participatory management is central to IB success (Ind & Bjerke, 2007), and the senior managers necessary to drive a holistic programme are perhaps less likely to interact personally with such a wide employee base, this reinforces Purcell & Hutchinson's (2007) and Morhart et al's (2009) call for IB responsibility at multiple levels of seniority.

3.2) Organisational and Brand Identity, Brand Orientation, and their relevance to Internal Marketing

A major focus of IM literature has been on how IM can influence employee attitudes and actions, encouraging internal stakeholders to adopt and convey organisational values, orienting staff towards organisational goals (Kiriakidou & Millward, 2000). Increasingly this focus, over how Organisational and Brand Identity can embed employee market-orientedness (e.g. – *ibid*), has become independent from the broader IM literature, and sometimes critical of IM but closely related. Organisational Identity (OI) has attracted many contrasting definitions. Whilst some academics believe it encapsulates culture, a mindset, vision and mission specific to an organisation (e.g. – Ravasi & van Rekom, 2003), a more traditional interpretation of OI considers tangibles (Schmidt, 1997) and

visually apparent aspects (Alessandri & Alessandri, 2004), aesthetic elements (Balmer, 1998) and external stakeholders' perceptions of the organisation (Cornelissen, Haslam & Balmer, 2007). The institutional view of OI is that it builds upon a combination of powerful subcultures within an organisation (Balmer, 2001), which gain uniqueness from their dependence upon the organisation's characteristics (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten & Mackey, 2002; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006), and from their independence from the employees' characteristics (Vella & Melewar, 2008). The contrasting, constructionist, view of OI considers it highly dependent upon employee perceptions of the organisation (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006), representing employees' daily workplace realities (Kiriakidou & Millward, 2000; Brickson, 2005), and requiring emotional consensus between employees (Alvesson & Empson, 2008; Gioia, Price, Hamilton & Thomas, 2010). By scrutinising employee influence on OI (Corley, 2004; Dhalla, 2007), constructionist conceptualisations of OI have complemented the notion of organisations developing Corporate Identity whilst acknowledging the evolving and evasive nature of OI (Alvesson & Empson, 2008). Whilst most 'traditional' views of Corporate Identity believe it derives from tangibles and aesthetic elements (e.g. – Blombäck & Ramirez-Pasillas, 2012), more recent interpretations analyse internal factors like operational policies and organisational strategies (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012), or seek a balance between the two perspectives (e.g. – Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

Brand Identity (BI) is an ambiguous concept, difficult to gauge in practice, the nature of which is contested by academics (Sicard, 2013), but there is broad agreement that it delivers promises to customers (Keller, 2009) simplifying decision-making (Ghodeswar, 2008), and that its constituent parts include culture, personality and relationships (e.g. – Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Kapferer, 2012). Aaker (2012) proposed that BI could be transmitted via products, people, semiotics or the organisation. As certain academics (e.g. – Urde, 2013) consider BI the sum of an organisation's values or employee behaviours

(Burmamann & Zeplin, 2005) – thus being driven from within - it may influence Organisational and Brand Identity (Burmamann & Zeplin, 2005). This link is explored occasionally (Burmamann, Jost-Benz & Riley, 2009; Yoganathan & McLeay, 2014), but its possible effects upon IM have lacked exploration. Whilst many studies conclude that employees shape BI from the inside out (e.g. – Van Rekom, Van Riel & Wierenga, 2006; Crain, 2009; King & Grace, 2010), they usually agree that paradoxically BI then requires strategic organisational efforts to encourage its consistent adoption by a workforce, orienting it to the organisation's brand, and reflecting and reinforcing the normative roles and experiences of employees (De Chernatony, 1999; Kiriakidou & Millward, 2000). Although some articles have argued that an inside out approach to BI could neglect external stakeholder requirements and foster undesirable perceptions (Scott & Lane, 2000), it could help prioritise deep-rooted identity above superficial brand image (Joachimsthaler & Aaker, 1996; Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006; Burmamann et al, 2009) and prevent employees from feeling alienated by having their BI dictated by external customers, many of whom would have only a fleeting, uncommitted brand association (Aaker, 2012). Moreover, as BI derived inside-out should be easier for employees to reinforce through brand-consistent behaviours, they are more likely in such cases to 'live the brand' (Mitchell, 2002; Ind, 2007) and have a physiological attachment to it (King, 2010). Within the mainstream IM literature, the relative merits of 'inside-out' versus 'outside-in' approaches deserve greater exploration.

Organisational values communicate to employees expectations on how they should approach their roles (Urde, 2013) and behave (Dobni, Ritchie & Zerbe, 2000; Williams, 2002). Therefore, building BI upon organisational culture brings uniqueness to the BI (Wheeler, Richey, Tokkman & Sablynski, 2006) and sustained competitive advantage which is difficult for rival organisations to attack (Aaker, 2012). BI and Corporate Identity are not entirely interchangeable, the latter being more enduring and difficult to alter

through strategic interventions (Balmer, 2012), but the BI is derived from Corporate Identity, and the two are largely inseparable (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2009; Blombäck & Ramirez-Pasillas, 2012). For this reason, a strand of literature has developed in which Corporate Brand Identity refers to the values representing a company within its brand (Kapferer, 2012; Harris & De Chernatony, 2001).

Brand Image comprises feelings (Roy & Banerjee, 2008) or associations (Davies, 2008) discerned by customers upon encountering a brand. Whilst Brand Identity focuses on what the brand means to internal stakeholders, Brand Image focuses on its meaning to external stakeholders, or recipients of brand communications (Joachimsthaler & Aaker, 1996; Nandan, 2005). Although Brand Identity underpins Brand Image (Kapferer, 2012), the relationship may become obscured where an organisation's brand architecture is complex (e.g. – in 'House of Brands' organisations) (Aaker, 2012). If Brand Image stems from Brand Identity, and Brand Identity from an organisation's brand culture (Wheeler et al, 2006), and IM helps engender a coherent and consistent brand culture, perhaps the indirect effects of IM on Brand Image are neglected within IM, Organisational and Brand Identity literature, due to the numerous intermediary factors. Whilst Brand Personality – human traits personifying a brand (Aaker, 1997) – is assessed to measure Brand Image (Davies, 2008) both internally and externally to an organisation, some theorists consider Brand Personality one of several dimensions of Brand Identity, therefore unsuitable as a measure (e.g. – Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009; Kapferer, 2012).

Brand Orientation (BO) may be defined as a holistic and integrated approach across an organisation to create a meaningful Brand Identity, guiding all processes, communications and interactions (Wong & Merrilees, 2007; Gromark & Melin, 2011) and considering the corporate brand a differentiating source of competitive advantage (Hankinson, 2002). As

the core values represented by the brand must be communicated clearly to employees (Hankinson, 2002) to produce BO and brand-consistent behaviours (Morhart et al, 2009), it appears that IM – more persuasive in its scope than Internal Communications - encapsulates, or at least facilitates, BO. BO incorporates values into decision-making and work activities (Aurand, Gorchels & Bishop, 2005), further suggesting a link to IM. Moreover, it fosters a strong sense of values internally (Urde, 2013), producing a powerful brand image amongst external stakeholders which brings competitive advantages (Wentzel, 2009; Baumgarth, 2010) and increased financial performance (Yen-Tsung & Ya-Ting, 2013).

Brand Orientation has been expanded to produce Employee Brand Orientation, said to exist when employees embody brand values (Mitchell, 2002; Ind, 2007) by internalising and reflecting them in performing their jobs and interacting with stakeholders inside and outside the organisation (Ind & Bjerke, 2007; Baumgarth, 2010). Despite often being considered evidence of BO, Employee Brand Orientation's subjective, intangible nature makes measurement difficult, although attempts have been made (Baumgarth, 2009). Antecedents to BO include a unified organisational culture (Gyrd-Jones, Merrilees & Miller, 2013), and consequences of BO include commonality of values between employees and customers (Mulyanegara, Tsarenko & Anderson, 2009) – both suggesting an overlap with IM. Moreover, the increasing fragmentation of employment through casualisation and/or increased staff turnover (Crain, 2009) makes BO potentially more difficult to achieve. In representing the brand (Gromark & Melin, 2011) within and outside their work roles (King, 2010), employees need to understand and transmit brand meaning (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007).

The values shaping BO are understood and accepted protocols guiding employees (De Chernatony, 2010) and the organisation (Murphy & Davey, 2002) through challenges.

Their role is to clarify, represent the organisation's heritage, reflect employees' work realities (Ind, 2007; Urde, 2013), underpin organisational culture (McDermott & O'Dell, 2001; Lencioni, 2002), and differentiate the brand (Williams, 2002; Ind, 2007; Urde, 2013). An organisation's values may differ in influence, with core values more effective than peripheral ones (Pant & Lachman, 1998; Van Rekom et al, 2006) and being represented more closely by the corporate brand (Burmman et al, 2009). However, the alignment of employee behaviour to core brand values is very important (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005) - further reinforcing the argument that IM and BO should be examined together.

The debate in IM literature over whether internal or external stakeholders should be afforded primacy (e.g. - Sasser & Arbeit, 1976; Brooks et al, 1999) is better developed in articles dealing specifically with BI and BO. Many scholars favour an 'outside-in' approach to corporate branding, where external stakeholders' expectations and values dictate to the organisation and its employees the values and culture to be adopted (Burmman et al, 2009), this being considered a customer-centric perspective (Urde, 2013) which better serves market demands (Blombäck & Ramirez-Pasillas, 2012). This is supposedly the predominant perspective (Ind & Bjerke, 2007; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2007), though not in all organisations (De Chernatony, 1999) and certainly less so in not-for-profit and public sector organisations (Gromark & Melin, 2013). Whilst the achievement of superior customer value is the main reason for adopting an 'outside-in' approach (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Miles & Mangold, 2004) in market-oriented organisations (Urde, 2013) – an approach embraced within IM literature by Narver & Slater (1990) amongst others – it is often problematic. Employees may feel that they have had external, alien or inappropriate values imposed upon them, perhaps leading to resistance or brand sabotage (Wallace & De Chernatony, 2009) – this is unsurprising, considering a customer's brand commitment may be fleeting, whereas an employee risks much when committing to an employer long-term. Cushen (2009) asserted that imposing customer values upon employees can be

arbitrary and symptomatic of weak organisational direction. Excessive market-orientation can produce short-termist, fadish decisions (Ind & Bjerke, 2007; Alsem & Kosteljik, 2008) potentially alienating employees and confusing an increasingly disoriented customer base. Moreover, without adequate interdepartmental communication, organisations may misdiagnose market conditions, implementing unnecessary, needlessly reactive strategies (Conduit & Mavondo, 2001).

An alternative approach to brand development is the inside-out approach where employee engagement identifies appropriate values (Ind, 2007) defining the brand simply (Urde, 2013), and translating it into customer benefits or superior value (Urde, 2003) and communicating externally (Ind & Bjerke, 2007), usually through employee-customer interaction (Ind, 2007). As with outside-in, the aim is to align employee behaviours, differentiate the brand and gain competitive advantage, but giving precedence to internal stakeholders' opinions (Burmam et al, 2009), avoiding employee disengagement and alienation (Alsem & Kosteljik, 2008). BO and BI literature has adopted a more 'inside-out' perspective (e.g. – Harris & De Chernatony, 2001; Burmann et al, 2009), focusing on identity rather than image, but IM literature has largely failed to track this evolution, and may benefit from doing so. Identity is usually considered employee-driven and internal (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005), and participatory rather than imposed by the Marketing function (De Chernatony & Segal Horn, 2003). Nonetheless, inside-out retains a focus on customer expectations, but is less prone to short-termism than outside-in (Urde, 2003) and is authentic to, and adoptable by, a wider range of employees (Ind, 2007).

Some scholars have warned against becoming too inward-focused and overlooking changes in the external environment which lead to strategic drift (Ind & Bjerke, 2007), but few have totally rejected an inside-out perspective. The traditional, market-led branding approach built around the desires of the target market (Ind & Bjerke, 2007) is increasingly

seen as damaging if not used alongside the employee perspective, which gives more future-proof brand foundations (Aaker, 2012) and competitive advantage (Wheeler et al, 2006). Indeed, the prevailing opinion is that strong brands should integrate both internal and external values and requirements (Urde, 2013), preferably by merging customer and employee communities in brand decisions (Ewing & Caruana, 1999). Some academics have recommended absolute primacy for internal stakeholders, as employee loyalty and satisfaction often form the bedrock of customer loyalty and satisfaction (Bansal et al, 2001), but most recent articles (e.g. – Burmann et al, 2009; Urde, 2013) advocate a compromise.

3.3) Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter has analysed the recent literature centred on IM-related themes – most notably Internal Branding, Organisational and Brand Identity, and Brand Orientation – ascertaining the relevance and importance of these areas in the development of IM. Perhaps most significant is the concept of Inside-Out and Outside-In brand orientation, and the extent to which the relative primacy afforded by an organisation to its internal and external markets affects internal stakeholders and influences their experiences of work.

The following chapter analyses established concepts from CM literature, explaining their potential use if transposed into the context of the internal market.

Chapter 4) Introducing concepts from Channel Management literature into Internal Marketing

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This chapter explores dyadic theories from CM literature which will inform a reappraisal of IM.

4.1) Rationale for using Channel Management literature to inform understanding of Internal Marketing

Gremler et al (1995) and Yang & Coates (2010) suggested dyadic perspectives as key to IM – apparently, because previous literature had neglected to focus on how IM is made, done or passed on. IM requires transmission through interaction within an IM dyad, then subsequent ones between individuals. As much CM literature focuses on dyadic perspectives, there is an opportunity to adopt such a lens to scrutinise intraorganisational relationships and transactions within IM. Additionally, the researcher's industrial experience – several years as a manager charged with IM and five years as a Regional

Manager in charge of a network of franchisees – suggests the phenomena experienced within both channels have significant commonality. Therefore, this research uses theory from extant CM literature to examine the dyadic nature of Internal Service Encounters and the wider IM landscape.

There are some potential difficulties in transposing CM theory into an IM context. Within a marketing channel, even where there may be intraorganisational contractual obligations, compelling commercial reasons to sustain the relationship, and disincentives to relationship cessation such as sunk costs and idiosyncratic investments (Anderson & Weitz, 1992), each party still has more freedom to leave its partner organisation than an employee potentially does if the dyadic phenomena are damaging or unsatisfactory. This is likely to mean that IM enjoys higher tolerance levels – at least from the weaker parties – than CM. Also, the differing purposes of dyadic interactions within and between organisations must be considered – it is possible that those transactions between organisations strive for a different balance of objectives than those within organisations.

In applying CM theory to relationships between a “service provider and [external] customer”, Solomon et al (1985, p.99) explored dyadic interactions as determinants of satisfaction towards service provision. Although this informed the conceptualisation of Service-Dominant Logic (e.g. – Vargo & Lusch, 2004), the perception of service encounters as dyadic interactions remained confined to those between organisations and external customers, largely undertaken by boundary personnel, for a decade, notwithstanding expansion by Surprenant & Solomon (1987). Whilst Sayles (1964), then Albrecht (1998), Davis (2001) and Strauss (1996), identified internal service themes and patterns, the notion of ‘Internal Service Encounters’ as IM conduits was not promulgated until Gremler, Bitner & Evans (1995) applied ideas from Solomon et al (1985) to the internal market. Moreover, Gremler et al’s (1995, p.28) definition of the Internal Service

Encounter as “*the dyadic interaction between an internal customer and an internal service provider*” has remained relatively undeveloped. Kang et al's (2002) study of Internal Service Encounters - between ‘customer-contact employee and manager’, ‘customer-contact employee and back-office employee’ or ‘back-office employee and manager’ – ignored dyadic characteristics and, citing Surprenant & Solomon (1987) as justification for observing their dyadic nature, Yang & Coates (2010) nonetheless chose not to draw upon literature on dyadic encounters occurring externally to organisations. Although Symbolic Interactionism suggests actors’ roles within service encounters should reflect organisational situation changes (McHugh, 1968; Blumer, 1969; Czepiel et al, 1985; Solomon et al, 1985; Hewitt, 1991; Guirguis & Chewing, 2005), there is little research into how this works, seemingly due to an absence of dyadic perspectives which would directly address the issue (Yang & Coates, 2010). Hence, there follows a critical examination of how such theory will be used to illuminate the dyadic nature of IM.

4.2) Reasons for, and benefits of, forming dyadic partnerships

The reasons for cross-dyad partnerships within CMs may differ from those internal to organisations because internal customers may have less freedom to reject the terms of service encounters (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; 2000). However, customers have tolerance levels towards services, produced by exit barriers and other considerations, beyond which they seek to change supplier (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2006). Within industrial sales channels, dyadic parties assess relationship potential by gauging supplier or distributor characteristics (Ghosh, Joseph, Gardner & Thach, 2004). Stronger members gain more benefits, but weaker members also gain by increasing switching costs – or raising exit barriers – experienced by stronger members (Crook & Combs, 2007). Whilst key antecedents to relationship satisfaction are often linked by the stronger party to financial performance and economic impact (Gassenheimer, Baucus & Baucus, 1996; Gassenheimer, Houston & Davis, 1998), and the weaker party's expectation of financial

rewards and competitive differentiation (Ghosh et al, 2004), Gassenheimer et al (1996) stated that control by the stronger party (e.g. - manufacturer over dealership) increases the stronger party's relationship satisfaction without undermining that of the weaker party.

Two further concepts on dyadic satisfaction factors and benefit expectations may potentially inform IM strategies: (i) the granting of greater differential benefits through a partnership can fuel acceptance of it yielding fewer financial benefits (Ghosh et al, 2004); (ii) the key benefits of dyadic partnership are not simply relational, but also psychological (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). When one considers IM broadly, encapsulating Employer Branding, IB and Employee Brand Orientation discussed previously, Davis & Mentzer's (2008) introduction of Trade Equity – where value accrues to one partner by being publicly associated as a trading partner of a specific organisation – may inform how organisations perceive value to employees.

4.3) The relationship – from the interorganisational to the intraorganisational

Between organisations, both buyers and sellers may instigate exchange and both parties are “mutually dependent” (Harker & Egan, 2006, p.222). Sweeney & Webb (2007) explored the effects of an individual's characteristics and personality on dyadic relationship success. Frazier & Summers (1984) believed most influential managers could increase request strategy effectiveness by giving low-cost but highly perceived favours to prime their partners, consequently building their reputations as experts, enabling use of recommendations and information exchange to garner further influence. Boyle & Dwyer (1995) saw the dyadic strategies of information exchange, promises and recommendations as precursors to dyadic success and increased relationalism, whilst threats, legalistic pleas and requests were detrimental to relationalism. Frazier & Summers (1984) made no such judgment but presented requests as a hard-won privilege

of more able managers. Boyle, Dwyer, Robicheaux & Simpson (1992) also linked relationalism to governance, whilst effects of cultural issues on dyadic relationships (Chung, Sternquist & Chen, 2008; Runyan, Sternquist & Chung, 2010) were noted.

Where there are exit barriers to relationship dissolution, relationship satisfaction greatly affects commitment, helping maintain relationships, but this increases with competitive attractiveness, or availability of alternatives (Sharma & Patterson, 2000; Harris, O'Malley & Patterson, 2003), but whilst relationships between individuals in B2B markets are "explicitly recognised by both parties" (Egan, 2001, p.380) and their benefits acknowledged, the variety of relationships between colleagues – in terms of formality, strength and intent – is likely to be much greater, complicating the application of CM dyadic theories to IM.

4.4) From dyadic relationalism to dyadic influence, control and power

When Doherty & Alexander (2006) examined how franchisors controlled franchisees, the research framework was the dichotomy between coercive and non-coercive power, which, in an IM context, delineated Rafiq & Ahmed's (1993) IM-HRM boundary. Power was generally classified as organisational or relational in origin. Nevertheless, no connection was made to IM, and certain articles asserted that dominant parties are largely unconcerned by negative side effects of their coercion strategies (Gelderman, Semeijn & De Zoete, 2008). Most 1990s channel literature observed influence strategies but neglected power sources (Mayo, Richardson & Simpson, 1998). Whilst later studies concluded that power worked directly or otherwise to benefit all parties - 'a rising tide lifts all boats' - Crook & Combs (2007) posited that partners with important resources were lifted farthest. Using French & Raven's (1959) power classifications of 'expert', 'legitimate' and 'referent', Kumar (2005) saw power at work in collaborative relationships. Whilst Dant

& Schul (1992) extended Lusch's (1976) research by scrutinising asymmetrical exchange relationships, their focus was interorganisational. In an IM context, it seems that scant consideration of power sources and effects leave practitioners dangerously uninformed when operationalising their strategies.

4.5) Satisfaction in dyadic relationships

Organisations resource the building, gauging and maintaining of employee satisfaction (Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer, 1996; Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002). Employees may also consider their employers' satisfaction levels and expectations (Levine, 1995). However, it is unlikely that they manage these satisfaction levels as formally and strategically as do partner organisations (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Satisfaction within interorganisational dyads is defined by its relationships with power (e.g. – Lewicki et al, 1998; Geyskens et al, 1999; Sharma & Patterson, 2000; Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003; Lai, 2007; Benton & Maloni, 2005) and trust (e.g. – Anderson & Weitz, 1989; Anderson & Weitz, 1992; Andaleeb, 1995; Geyskens et al, 1999; Sharma & Patterson, 2000; Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003). It is classified as 'social' (or 'noneconomic') and 'economic' (Geyskens et al, 1999; Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000; Lai, 2007). Zineldin (1998) found the use of coercive power by one party unimportant to the satisfaction of the other, but found trust levels significant in engendering relationship satisfaction. However, Benton & Maloni (2005) found power-affected buyer-seller relationships to have significant effects, not just on satisfaction, but also on performance, suggesting the power-satisfaction variable to be paramount in supply chain partnerships – a conclusion which Lai (2007) found equally applicable in non-individualistic oriental societies.

Geyskens et al (1999) found satisfaction separable from trust and commitment, and divisible into entirely separate 'economic' and 'noneconomic' constructs. Lewicki et al

(1998) proposed that trust and distrust are not bipolar opposites and that relationships are not one-dimensional constructs, creating the possibility that channel partners – and perhaps employees – may mistrust one aspect of an organisation's actions or intentions, but trust other aspects of its relationship with them. Despite finding that the reputational gains from partnership formation, and other relational benefits, increase levels of satisfaction, Jonsson & Zineldin (2003) found lack of trust and/or commitment not necessarily detrimental to satisfaction. Anderson & Weitz (1989) stressed the reciprocal nature of communication and trust, whilst Andaleeb (1995) found high levels of trust in a dyadic partner to reduce willingness to exert controls over that partner. Moreover, when comparing efficacy of social versus economic satisfaction in influencing performances of channel suppliers, social satisfaction appears more important (Geyskens et al, 1999; Geyskens & Steenkamp, 2000; Lai, 2007).

4.6) Dependency and interdependency in dyadic relationships

Dependency is considered the main driver of interorganisational relationship performance (Palmatier, Dant & Grewal, 2007), but not as a straight-line effect, as dependency also indirectly feeds the long-term orientation of each partner toward the other, acting as an antecedent of reciprocated trust, and this long-term orientation increases dependency in a self-perpetuating manner (Chung et al, 2008). Whilst Payan & McFarland (2005) found high dependency levels a precursor to the use of coercive influence strategies like promises and threats, Lai (2009) found dependence symmetry crucial, noting that, as interdependence increases, suppliers adopt fewer coercive strategies (apart from promises), but more non-coercive strategies. To encourage commitment, investments may be specific to that relationship, whilst Jap (1999) said they are driven by co-ordination efforts, a shared desire for enhanced performance and competitive advantage, and by environmental dynamism and demand, with complementary capabilities facilitating those investments. If this theory is applicable to IM, some individualisation of the internal service

encounter (in both directions) may be necessary for maximum effectiveness. Egan (2000), analysing Relationship Marketing, suggested that as competitive advantage becomes more easily replicated, organisations renew strategies more frequently to defend their advantage – which may apply to IM where organisations see it in those terms.

Frazier, Gill & Kale (1989) explored the strong relationship between reciprocity and dependence, finding that channel intermediaries became dependent through feeling obligated to partners who had previously provided good service or acted openly. McFarland, Bloodgood & Payan (2008, p.63) focused on “Supply Chain Contagion”, finding that dependence asymmetry between channel partners produces a negative effect on manifest (or behavioural) contagion. Applying this to IM, if an employer and employee enjoy equal dependence levels, the behaviours which the employer displays in their transactions with that employee are less likely to be replicated unintentionally in their dealings with other employees. Gassenheimer & Ramsey (1994) discovered that, whilst mutual dependence levels, and power-dependence imbalances, affect retailer satisfaction levels in the supply chain, the impact is reduced progressively if the manufacturer is the secondary or tertiary supplier in terms of annual business volume. In IM, this may be particularly relevant to organisations using outsourced or temporary staff, which are currently increasing in the UK through zero hours contracts and the ‘gig economy’ (Moore, 2017).

4.7) Dyadic commitment, stability, long-term relational orientation and formalisation of dyadic relationships

Commitment may be influenced by one party’s perception of the other’s commitment, the self-reported and perceived pledges made by each party, communication levels, reputation and relationship history (Anderson & Weitz, 1992). The first and second of

these factors assume an expectation of reciprocity and could partially explain why dyadic relationship breakdown can accelerate. Anderson & Weitz's (1989) earlier article maintained that relationships stabilise with age, requiring lower communication levels, and that communication accrues between partners. Commitment is not considered static and one-dimensional within a relationship, but to change over time, mirroring changes in relationship characteristics and benefits, although commitment is impacted constantly by increasing benefits, with functional benefits delivering firm-level commitment (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). Morgan & Hunt (1994), found the main contributory factors to commitment to be termination costs, relationship benefits, shared values and trust, with commitment itself being a major contributory factor to acquiescence, cooperation and a reduced propensity to seek relationship exit. The study was noteworthy for juxtaposing commitment and trust, their causes and effects. Polo-Redondo & Cambra-Fierro (2008) considered commitment and long-term orientation produced by standardisation of production, noting that standardised firms seek long-term, standardised relationships. There is no equivalent study within IM to ascertain whether commitment levels between organisations and their internal stakeholders are influenced by standardisation levels.

4.8) Channel diplomacy, dyadic influence strategies and incentivisation

Kumar, Scheer & Steenkamp (1995) tested if disfunctionality within dyadic relationships increases with interdependence asymmetry. They found trust and commitment to the supplier declined, and interorganisational conflict increased, as interdependence became less symmetrical, but also that the greater the total interdependence within the relationship, the higher the trust and commitment, and the lower the levels of conflict. Moreover, Kumar et al (1998) discovered that punitive actions against channel partners increased with an organisation's punitive capabilities but decreased as relationship interdependency grew. Whilst bilateral "exchange-of-persons" between intermediaries is a recognised mediation technique in channel conflict resolution (Stern, Sterntahl & Craig,

1973, p.169), its application within IM appears limited to corporate boards appointing employee representatives and/or policy-makers undertaking 'shop floor' familiarisation. Dant & Schul (1992) crystallised conceptualised conflict resolution strategies as choices based on risk levels. Jap (1999) returned to trust, with cooperation and goal congruence as an enabler of mutually beneficial interorganisational outcomes, considering this 'integrative' rather than 'distributive' bargaining. Roering's seminal (1977) article instead studied effects of specific actions upon negotiations (e.g. - whether the use of the pronoun 'we' affected the outcome of negotiations). Rosenbloom (1978) produced an article which was unusually descriptive and almost phenomenological in style, using generic literature to explore channel negotiations, and especially the importance of reciprocity.

Relationalism grows from information exchange, recommendations and promises (Boyle et al, 1992). Moreover, information exchange increases exchange relationship performance, whereas requests, legalistic pleas and threats are all deleterious (Boyle & Dwyer, 1995). Payan & McFarland (2005) introduced the concept of 'rationality' as a non-coercive strategy which nonetheless incorporated a full argument structure. Whilst the idea, of increasing influence and goodwill from another party by offering a rationale for one's actions, derived from social psychologists such as Cialdini (1993), this was the first time it had been the focus of a study located in dyadic relationships. Lai (2007) disputed several aspects of previous work on the categorisation and characteristics of influence strategies, suggesting the promise strategy is separate from coercive strategies, and the request strategy from non-coercive strategies, as both have hybrid qualities and effects highly dependent upon the conditions hosting them. Sheu & Hu (2008) then led the debate towards scrutiny of more explicit influence strategies such as overt incentivisation, finding power most likely to incentivise explicitly, and that these incentives would garner weaker party commitment. Additionally, the performance enhancements achieved brought competitive advantage, determining overall channel performance. It seems therefore that

within an organisation, improved performance outcomes may arise from incentivising individuals within IM adhering to a predetermined process aimed at enhancing relationalism.

4.9) Relational quality and norms and their effects on cooperation and compliance

When Van Bruggen, Antia, Jap, Reinartz & Pallas (2010) asserted that Relationship Marketing principles are manifest in interpersonal interactions between buyers and sellers, higher quality relationships were characterised by more 'friendly' interactions, centred less on asking questions, disagreements and compliance behaviour. Whilst there is substantiation of the finding that, as relationship quality improves, buyers give sellers more time to talk, several characteristics used to define 'relational quality' required stronger grounding in previous literature. Nevertheless, the study focuses on qualitative concepts, being process-driven and rooted deeper in Relationship Marketing than previous studies. Hadjikhani & Thilenius (2005), found the number, location and quality of connections between two organisations impact on focal business relationships, exploring effects of both horizontal and vertical relationships on commitment and trust. Although de Hildebrand e Grisi & Puga Ribiero (2004) were concerned primarily with antecedents of relationship decay and dissolution, most academics instead studied antecedents of relationship success and longevity – e.g. - Jap's (1999) linking of cooperation with trust and goal congruence.

Payan & McFarland (2005) noted that, whilst influence strategies achieve channel member compliance, they do not improve relational outcomes, with most non-coercive strategies producing greater compliance. Gelderman et al (2008) developed this, noting that stronger dyadic partners recognise compliance and non-compliance in partners' behaviours in a simplistic, binary fashion, and the weaker members also recognise partial

or delayed compliance. If applied to IM, this suggests the stronger partners could be ill-equipped to judge accurately the extent of compliance (e.g. – to brand values) – although one may not consider compliance consistent with IM's distinction from HRM by its avoidance of coercion (e.g. – Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993).

4.10) From interorganisational dyadic behaviour to the dyadic behaviour of individual boundary personnel

Dyadic interorganisational relationship characteristics are influenced by macro environmental factors like market liberalisation (Brenkers & Verboven, 2006; Van Riel, Liljander, Semeijn & Polsa, 2011) and by organisational behaviour (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). Grayson & Ambler's (1999) study of trust barely distinguished between firms and people when identifying trust's role in boosting involvement, interaction, commitment and expectations in short-term relationships, and in discouraging opportunism and lack of objectivity. Hunter, Gassenheimer & Siguaw (2011) adopted the individual's perspective, noting that situational influences impact most upon behaviour. By focusing on suspicion in interorganisational relationships, Hunter et al's (2011) study challenged previous literature linking suspicion to relationship decay, recognising its role in relationship sustenance, and asserting that in a bell curve relationship, high or low levels of suspicion are harmful to a relationship whilst an intermediate amount prevents both hostility and complacency. Such theory may challenge the necessity of reducing suspicion and building trust within the internal market. Jap (1999) viewed trust as an antecedent and outcome of cooperation and goal congruence, and Palmatier et al (2007) recognising the commitment-trust relationship as driving interorganisational relationship performance. Payan & McFarland (2005) found that low trust makes recommendation strategies counterproductive but that the interaction between trust and recommendations on compliance is significant, whilst Lado, Dant & Tekleab's (2008) exploration of the trust-opportunism construct found that, as both increase, interorganisational relationalism and subjective performance both

decrease then increase in an inverse bell curve. Kumar et al (1998) showed punitive capability asymmetry between channel members to affect the use of punitive actions whilst interdependence asymmetry did not, labelling this 'bilateral deterrence'. This is potentially significant to Internal Marketers accepting Rafiq & Ahmed's (1993) boundary between their function and HRM.

Sweeney & Webb (2007) utilised Social Exchange Theory to understand effects of individuals on channel relationships, considering psychological relationship benefits to individuals and groups. McFarland et al (2008, p.63) expanded this resurgence of literature linking social connectivity with ideas from epidemiology resulting from the emergence of online social networks, proposing "Supply Chain Contagion", in which interfirm behaviours experienced in one dyadic relationship inform – often negatively – adjacent supply chain relationships. The authors identified key antecedents of contagion as environmental uncertainty, and a perception that the contact occurring between boundary personnel is similar in the second relationship to the first, with frequent contact in both. Arguably this notion of contagion was present earlier in IM literature, although less explicitly, with the implicit understanding that an organisation's treatment of its employees, especially boundary personnel, would influence their employees' treatment of customers and other external stakeholders.

4.11) The established debate on channel conflict within interorganisational dyads

A major concern of literature on interorganisational relationships is channel conflict. Rosenberg & Stern (1973) considered conflict standard organisational behaviour, which Rosenberg (1974) subsequently mapped through 'covert' and 'overt' stages of its evolution. Assael's (1969) initial conceptualisation of distribution channel conflict offered no exploration of individual or group dynamics, and their inclusion in subsequent studies

was gradual, peaking with Kale's (1989) insistence that individuals' personality variables and their impact on dependence were of primary importance – for example, the impact of alienation and reciprocity on conflict. Gaski & Ray (2004) ignored this, proposing 'alienation' as a supra-construct encompassing 'estrangement' and 'social malintegration', but only conceptualising it at an organisational level. Building upon Rosenberg & Stern's (1970) organisation-level research into causes, measurement, management and consequences of conflict, Lusch (1976) gauged the impact of power on conflict. Whilst Rosenberg & Stern (1971) provided clear commentary of common dyadic domains (or channel roles), Ross & Lusch (1982) sidestepped criticism of earlier work (Etgar, 1978) to highlight limitations in Rosenberg & Stern's (1971) article in failing to distinguish between causes of conflict and conflict itself. In doing so, Ross & Lusch (1982) explored domain dissensus and perceptual incongruity and their effects on conflict (of which none were found) and on cooperation (where a strong correlation was apparent). This work was particularly important in showing that, although conflict and cooperation have shared roots, they are not opposite ends of a bipolar construct, as previously assumed.

Rosenberg & Stern (1971) described the organisation-level importance of the perceptions held by each partner of the other's role, but not at an interpersonal level. Gaski's (1989) article on dealer-supplier affinity considered the relationship between a supplier's district manager and distributor staff, describing performance measures – mostly derived from common operational factors - which cause conflict, such as the district manager delaying delivery of required product to the dealer. The conflict discussed hitherto is affective conflict, which is attitudinal and hidden deliberately from the source of the conflict, and the debate has invariably treated it as a deleterious by-product of relationships. However, Rosenberg (1974) explored the potential relational and commercial benefits of (especially latent) conflict, (e.g. - as a catalyst for organisational reflexivity and self-evaluation, and to galvanise efforts). A parallel debate developed into manifest conflict, which is malicious

and involves behavioural outcomes observable by the originator. Rosenberg & Stern (1970) considered its causes structural rather than relational, impacting upon exogenous variables such as demand, therefore being extremely damaging to the relationship. Etgar (1979) produced a comprehensive study into conflict sources and types, identifying a dichotomy between cognitive / affective / attitudinal sources on one side and behavioural / manifest ones on the other. His nine key causes of conflict (e.g. - goal divergence and drive for autonomy) were further split into 46 specifics, some potentially meriting consideration within IM practitioner guidelines, as would Dant & Schul's (1992) classification of conflict resolution strategies. Several noteworthy articles have explored channel conflict in terms of relationship decay and partnership cessation. Gaski & Ray (2004, p.158), describing 'alienation' as a "feeling of separation or estrangement" or "social malintegration", whilst Grayson & Ambler (1999) discussed how long-term relationships can impact negatively on service use, lessening the effect of trust. Gassenheimer et al (1996) considered reasons for relationship cessation to be the suppressing of a partner's margin opportunities or unrealistic targets.

4.12) Summary of dyadic perspectives potentially transferable from Channel Management to the internal market

The following perspectives and phenomena explored within extant CM literature will be examined within an IM context during the focus group discussion, gauging their transferability:

* Satisfaction within the internal market may be linked to power (e.g. – Benton & Maloni, 2005; Lai, 2007) and trust (e.g. – Sharma & Paterson, 2000; Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003), although antecedents and characteristics of satisfaction in IM are currently underexplored. It would be useful for practitioners to understand if satisfaction plays an equivalent role across all levels of seniority within organisations.

* Just as the channel intermediary role is adapted to fit specific interorganisational interactions at an individual level, maturing with the relationship (Etgar, 1979), it is likely that this also occurs intraorganisationally, influencing satisfaction levels (Lai, 2007; Van Riel et al, 2011) within internal service delivery.

* More recent CM literature has acknowledged the possibility of interorganisational relationships being influenced by tacit, haphazard, informal nuances of interpersonal communication (Lado, Dant & Tekleab, 2008). It is likely that such nuances are influential in IM, but this is unexamined.

* Roles within external service encounters evolve to match organisational circumstances and external conditions (e.g. – Hewitt, 1991; Guirguis & Chewning, 2005), but there has been little exploration of this phenomenon in IM.

* Within marketing channels, strong and weak intermediaries derive different motivations and expectations from each other's actions, as they expect different relationship benefits (Ghosh et al, 2004; Gassenheimer et al, 1996). In IM, it may be necessary to classify members as 'weaker' or 'stronger' depending on their hierarchical position to explore this effect.

* Gassenheimer et al's (1996) description of the control-satisfaction relationship in supply chains may not transfer to IM, due to the definition of IM as non-coercive (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002). However, there may exist in IM different levels of covert, implied coercion, especially if one interprets 'control' broadly.

- * It may also be expected that, just as in CM, relational and psychological benefits are enjoyed by dyadic partners (Sweeney & Webb, 2007), though perhaps dependent on status and authority.
- * Moreover, as in supply chains, IM partners may not only experience mistrust and suspicion, but these experiences may benefit relationships (Hunter et al, 2011).
- * Credible IM implementation may require some divergence between organisational and personal characteristics, as dyadic members may wish to differentiate themselves from their organisations (Sweeney & Webb, 2007).
- * In channel dyads, partners' mutual perceptions (Gassenheimer et al, 1996), and their willingness to make 'idiosyncratic investments' (Anderson & Weitz, 1992, p.19), influence relationship success – perhaps applicable to IM.
- * Different supply chain influence strategies produce different reactions and perceptions from recipients, with some deleterious to the relationship or indicative of poor relationship health (Frazier & Summers, 1984). Ascertaining how much this applies within organisations would assist IM practitioners in adopting more favourable strategies.
- * It has yet to be researched whether the expert, legitimate or referent power explored within interorganisational dyads as differently effective (e.g. – Lusch, 1976; Dant & Schil, 1992) would produce similar outcomes within organisations.
- * Likewise, Gassenheimer et al's (1996) scrutiny of channel intermediaries' willingness to surrender control, in response to certain favourable channel partner behaviours, will be used as the basis for scrutiny of IM relationships.

* As dependence, interdependence and dependence asymmetry between channel partners influence relationalism and engagement (Payan & McFarland, 2005; Chung et al, 2008; Lai, 2009), it is worthwhile exploring their applicability to IM.

* Whilst relationship building incentives are effective in supply chains (Sheu & Hu, 2008), it is not yet ascertained whether they can be used within IM to facilitate productive relationships.

* The link between cooperation and relationship longevity (De Hildebrand e Grisi & Puga Ribiero, 2004), and with trust and goal congruence (Jap, 2009), may be transferable to IM.

* The extent to which compliance may facilitate IM as it facilitates channel relationships (Payan & McFarland, 2005) should be explored, especially considering IM's supposed avoidance of coercion (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2002).

4.13) Summary of Chapter 4


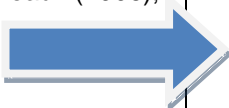





In this chapter, concepts from CM literature have been introduced, and their possible interest when placed within an IM context discussed. It was established that, as many IM relationships are dyadic, extant literature on the formation, benefits and justification of dyadic partnerships in the supply chain may be useful. Potential differences between interpersonal and intraorganisational relationships were identified. Moderating factors within dyads central to CM literature – satisfaction, dependency, interdependency, commitment, trust, stability and relational orientation – were considered in an IM context, and the viability of their transfer examined. Other mitigating factors, such as diplomacy, influence strategies, cooperation and compliance, were similarly discussed. There was consideration of the extent to which theory appertaining to interorganisational dyadic behaviour might relate to the dyadic behaviours of individual boundary personnel. The

chapter concluded with a holistic discussion, summarising how dyadic perspectives might be transferred from marketing channels to IM.

In the next chapter, the philosophical underpinnings of this research are discussed – the ontological, epistemological and theoretical perspectives, and their potential effects on the research.

Overleaf: Table 2: Evolution of Channel Management theory.

Table 2: Evolution of Channel Management theory.

'Classic' Channel Literature	'Transitional' Channel Literature	'Emergent' Channel Literature
<u>Individuals' Influence on the Dyad:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stern, Sternthal & Craig (1973); • Mayo, Richardson & Simpson (1998). 	<u>Relationalism:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frazier & Summers (1984); • Boyle, Dwyer, Robicheaux & Simpson (1992); • Gassenheimer, Sterling & Ronicheaux (1996); • Cann (1998); • Sharma & Patterson (2000). 	<u>Influence, Relationship Satisfaction & Benefits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghosh, Joseph, Gardner & Thach (2004); • Payan & McFarland (2005); • Hadjikhani & Thilenius (2005); • Crook & Combs (2007); • Sweeney & Webb (2007); • Davis & Mentzer (2008); • Sheu & Hu (2008).
<u>Types of Channel Power:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lusch (1976); • Dant & Schul (1992). 	<u>Power Asymmetry & Effects:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andersen & Weitz (1989); • Lewicki, McAllister & Bies (1998); • Geyskens, Steenkamp & Kumar (1999). 	<u>Power, Control and Satisfaction:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonsson & Zineldin (2003); • Benton & Maloni (2005); • Kumar (2005); • Doherty & Alexander (2006); • Lai (2007).
<u>Channel Diplomacy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosenberg (1974); • Roering (1977); • Rosenbloom (1978). 	<u>Relationship Commitment & Standardisation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kumar, Scheer & Steenkamp (1998); • Jap, Manolis & Weitz (1999). 	<u>Dependence and Interdependence:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bantham, Celuch & Kasouf (2003); • De Hildebrand e Grisi & Puga Ribiero (2004); • Palmatier, Dant & Grewal (2007); • Chung, Sternquist & Chen (2008); • Lai (2009).
<u>Channel Conflict:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assael (1969); • Rosenberg & Stern (1971); • Etgar (1979); • Ross & Lusch (1982); • Kale (1989). • Gaski (1989). 		<u>Cooperation, Compliance & Intrachannel Behaviours:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenkers & Verboven (2006); • Gelderman, Semeijn & Zoete (2008); • Lado, Dant & Tekleab (2008); • McFarland, Bloodgood & Payan (2008); • Van Riel, Liljander, Semeijn & Polsa (2011); • Hunter, Gassenheimer & Siguaw (2011).

Chapter 5) Philosophical Underpinnings of the Research

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This research is interpretivist, assuming realities are socially constructed and multiple. It is theory-building, facilitating understanding of a phenomenon and its roles. Although these may represent a larger population, it explores experiences which may be specific, unique and deviant. It assumes that knowledge and meanings are relative – bound by time, context, culture and values. It also facilitates an interactive, participative and cooperative researcher-participant relationship. This chapter explores those philosophical underpinnings in detail, explaining how they inform the methodological choices, fulfilling the research aims.

5.1) Ontological, epistemological and theoretical perspectives

Berger & Luckmann (1966) discouraged excessive deliberation over epistemological dilemmas. However, given the dominance of organisation-level studies of IM, and the underrepresentation of employee experiences, this research is intended to explore multi-stakeholder perspectives, promoting subjugated voices to ‘primary informant’ status (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.145), thus reinterpreting IM.

The interpretivist paradigm is a framework roughly delimiting how the researcher conceptualises the world, and the assumptions entailed by such a worldview (Crotty, 2003). It comprises ontological and epistemological beliefs informing the methodological decisions and analysis of the data, guiding the researcher (Guba, 1990) towards culturally and historically embedded practices (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Therefore, it defines the nature of reality, justifying the research methods (Crotty, 2003). The four major interpretivist paradigms are usually identified as (i) positivist and postpositivist; (ii) constructivist-interpretive; (iii) critical; and (iv) feminist-poststructural (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This research is broadly constructivist-interpretive, denoting the theoretical perspective embraced (Crotty, 2003) and helping define the principal research interests and methodological approach to inquiry (Gummesson, 2000). The research approach, methods and interpretations are influenced by the researcher's knowledge and experiences (Baker, 2003). Whereas the methodology may influence data collection and analysis operationally, it bears theoretical considerations stemming from the researcher's background and beliefs (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

The ontological basis for this research – the concept of what exists - is relativist. It perceives that realities are constructed from social understandings and meanings, with multiple truths of equal legitimacy and veracity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) which are relative to the participant standpoint and, less so, the researcher (Creswell, 2014). The methodological choices explore the multiplicity and plurivocality of truths (Hosking, 1999), which may include participant constructions specifically for the interview (Deetz, 2000) comprehended as partial, situated accounts (Riessman, 2008) - emergent, moving and 'becoming' (Chia, 1996; Chia, 2000). Both reality and knowledge may be polysemic – voiced by many and borne of many meanings (Cunliffe, 2008).

Epistemology explains “how we know what we know” (Crotty, 2003, p.3), concerning the relative positions of the researcher and the known (Deetz, 2000). This research takes Social Constructionism as its epistemological position, being reflexive, viewing insights and meanings as continuously re-shaped by context, and assuming knowledge as often constructed tacitly – in everyday interactions, conversations (Cunliffe, 2008) and ‘Internal Service Encounters’ (e.g. - Kang, James & Alexandris, 2002). It is assumed that participants co-create meaning and realities socially to understand the phenomena experienced within IM (Cunliffe, 2008).

As this research must produce knowledge to explore realities, it acknowledges the historical situatedness of knowledge, and to what extent it is relational and constructed (Hosking & Morley, 1991), especially as knowledge must be experienced by the person witnessing a phenomenon to construct an interdependent reality (ibid). The co-construction and reconstruction of meaning by research participants must be contextualised within social institutions – organisations, public opinions and social meanings (Oliver, 1991) – to influence their thoughts and actions, being constantly reappraised and adjusted (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Berger & Luckmann (1966) conceptualised facts as social products in knowledge construction, whilst Deetz (2003) considered knowledge and understanding products of aspirations, procedures, instruments and institutions, themselves evolved. This research assumes that sense-making and the construction of reality are relational, dialogical processes, with realities experienced through benign, coercive interpersonal interactions (Cunliffe, 2008) – an interpretation suiting CM concepts. With this temporality and iteration, participants construct knowledge (Chia, 1995) from contexts, interactions and episodes of meaning-making (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), prompting phenomenological interviews in which open-ended questions are changed according to participant responses and needs

(Creswell, 2014), allowing each to provide alternative phenomenological descriptions (Hosking & Fineman, 1990).

This research takes a qualitative approach, garnering ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973) which embrace context (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) and permit researcher subjectivity (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). This frees the researcher to co-construct meanings with participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and avoid asking direct, specific or rigid questions which may force inauthentic meaning to the surface (Coupland, 2001). The research epistemology is therefore Social Constructionism, asserting that individuals can judge the discourses driving our worldview (Crotty, 2003). Although constructionism is a continuum (Cunliffe, 2008), research in this tradition challenges accepted knowledge(s) and normative order (Burr, 2003) to understand ourselves relative to others - especially through social interactions (Hosking & Morley, 1991; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997).

Whilst Social Constructivism concentrates on participants’ meaning making, Social Constructionism focuses on the generation of meaning by many people, via different processes and mechanisms and within a cultural context (Crotty, 2003). Indeed, its subjectivity links thoughts and emotions of individuals with their “political, cultural and historical contexts” (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992, p.4).

5.2) Phenomenology

5.2.1) Defining phenomenology

Qualitative research investigates the characteristics of a context and those inhabiting it, analysing events in specific temperospatial frames rather than predicting future occurrences (Merriam, 1998), often prompting a phenomenological approach - a position

facilitating conveyance of meaning and experience (Moran, 2000; Guignon, 2006). The Husserlian concept of 'intentionality' contends that we objectify the universe by our intentional acts. However, phenomenology is not 'anything goes', solipsism or unbridled subjectivity. "It is the articulation, based on intuition, of a fundamental meaning without which a phenomenon could not present itself as it is" (Giorgi, 1997, p.242).

Methods used by phenomenological researchers are a "systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience" (van Manen, 1990, p.10), but encapsulate a philosophy, research paradigm and methodology (Anosike, Ehrich & Ahmed, 2012). Holt & Sandberg (2011, p.216), rejecting positivism and, asserting that specifics are indefinable, described phenomenology as the refusal to distil interpretations of ourselves and our environments to isolated specifics through advocated methods. Therefore, instead of being positivistic, this research explores human actions – and their intentions, meanings and purposes – rather than behaviour. Geertz (1973) adopted this stance in his interpretive anthropology of tribal cultures, probing the societies of peoples as per their own perceptions. The researcher's unique perspective builds on the intuitive reflections of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). These research decisions recognised the relationship between participants and their intentional objects, and that not all meanings are of equal quality (Holt & Sandberg, 2011).

5.2.2) Phenomenology as the philosophical underpinning for this research, and the influence of postmodernism

Phenomenology in this research represents a data collection strategy and a philosophical colouring of all presuppositions and choices. A traditional scientist, Husserl tried to remove context, such as a researcher's experience, history or opinions, from his findings (Husserl, 1983; Koch, 1995; Lopez & Willis, 2004). However, Heidegger insisted that such

environmental factors and the contexts in which participants live are essential in ascertaining broad understanding of their experiences (Paley, 1998). This research assumes that the researcher's experiences and beliefs cannot realistically be divorced from the interview conduct or data analysis, nor should be, and is therefore broadly Heideggerian, rather than Husserlian. Institutional Theory, influential in organisational studies stemming from Heidegger's belief in the importance of context, investigates how macro-contextual factors (e.g. - organisational restructuring or a round of redundancies) shape micro-level meaning (e.g. - the lived experience of someone within an IM campaign) (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), and are important within this research. It becomes clear in the analysis that participant experiences are shaped by the nature of the IM which they experience, and the reasons for the IM, participant seniority and/or role, attitudes and actions of those with whom participants interacted, organisational and workforce characteristics, and other factors.

This research standpoint may also be broadly defined as postmodernist, embracing the following: (i) that much knowledge and expertise within an organisation is tacit, unrecorded, unformalised, often unknown or unacknowledged, constructed at multi-hierarchical levels (particularly amongst sub-managerial employees), and linked to a "loss of the identifiable" (Gergen, 1991, p.112); (ii) that organisations do not necessarily serve as a societal benefit; (iii) that organisations experience constant flux through adaptation to environmental changes, strategic planning deficiencies and the perceived need of newly-appointed executives to introduce change, which becomes cyclical. This links to the challenge to authority and "breakdown of rational order" identified by Gergen (1991, p.123-6); that individuals' experiences may be objectified through language to construct the 'many truths' (Gergen, 1991, p.119) present in the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966); that in objectifying these experiences, individuals reflect in

individualistic ways rather than against more traditional, sombre managerial measures, this idea linking to Gergen's (1991, p.134) "self-reflection and the intrusion of irony".

5.2.3) Phenomenology – from philosophy to methodology

There is little researcher guidance available on selecting a phenomenological methodology to investigate participants' lived experiences, although several alternative approaches, each with different assumptions, objectives and analytical processes, were clarified by Gill (2014). Sandberg & Pinnington (2009) outlined three skills required in phenomenological interviews: (i) the minimising of idealisation in dialogue-based interviews by requesting that participants elaborate their descriptions by offering specific examples to illustrate their experiences; (ii) the capturing of criticality by asking questions, not just about meaning, but also about involved others, which relates to Heidegger's focus on context and is reflected in the VCRM (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) of qualitative data analysis explored later; and (iii) the observing of participants in practice, experiencing those things being described, which is reflected by the introduction in this research of a new method of participant-led digital member checking. Sandberg & Pinnington's (2009) advice encouraged the researcher to achieve proximity to the subject matter, harvest multiple triangulating sources of data demonstrating not just reiteration but also contrast, request that interviewees translate any abstract ideas as concrete examples, and constantly refer to the actions of those being studied.

Moustakas (1994) proposed four steps in undertaking phenomenological research: (i) the epoche; (ii) phenomenological reduction; (iii) imaginative variation; and (iv) synthesis. During the epoche step, the researcher attempts to exclude bias and sets aside prejudices or presuppositions which could taint the research. Preconceptions may be written down, and thus bracketed. Existential phenomenologists would challenge the

legitimacy of such an approach, considering 'bias' a false concept imported from postpositivism, and the bracketing of preconceptions undesirable. This research is broadly existential phenomenology and, after careful consideration, bracketing has not been used. However, to appeal to a broad audience and garner credibility with postpositivist readers and practitioners, bias is acknowledged and managed. More discussion of this is provided in the analysis of Sandberg & Pinnington (2009) in section 5.2.6, and in the discussion of quality, rigour and credibility in section 6.3.

During the phenomenological reduction stage, precision is sought within the findings. As objects and actions are often deceptive, the researcher should not take comments at face value (Giorgi, 1997), but understand systematically the processes by which things became, approaching objects with consciousness and openness. This approach is not limited to observation, but also description. Moustakas (1994) clarified this second, reductive step, categorising necessary elements of phenomenological reduction: the need to stipulate research boundaries to prevent drift; the horizontalisation of data by affording equivalence to each statement and interrogating the conditions which gave the phenomenon its characteristics; the deliberate omission of repetitive or irrelevant statements; the categorising of residual data into themes which, through iterative analysis, emit repetitive patterns of light and shade which form the basis for textual description; the willingness to extract previously indiscernible layers and themes. The third step, of imaginative variation, demands that the researcher sift through alternative perspectives, roles and functions to seek all plausible meanings, building structural themes which delve beneath the superficial and define the essence of the experience. The final step – synthesising meanings and methods – should unite both structural and textural descriptions, building a meta-narrative of experience of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1997).

5.2.4) Phenomenology accommodating postpositivism: subtle realism

Even if a researcher, as is the case here, is appreciative of a pure existential phenomenological approach, “demonstrating the trustworthiness of one’s dissertation research is a requirement for all doctoral candidates” (Angen, 2000, p.378), and this obligation may encourage an author to strive towards measures of validity originating in realist ontology, even where this may appear slightly incongruous with a more existential epistemological stance. The key to a pragmatic accommodation would appear to lie in the popular “interpretive reconfigurations of validity” (ibid.) – and in particular, those of Guba & Lincoln (1985) discussed at length in chapter 6 – which remove any pseudo-scientific notions of the distant, aloof observer, but nonetheless enable researchers to provide demonstrable proof of methodological rigour, either to academics appraising the research or to the broad readership which is intended to be engaged in the debate.

The notion of validity arises from realist, quantitative research, which demonstrates validity through strict adherence to a proscribed set of statistical tests and mathematical considerations. Many quantitative observers have therefore dismissed qualitative research as lacking legitimacy (Mishler, 1990) and for failing to fulfil their expectations of validity, believing that interpretive studies can, at best, provide the exploratory groundwork for subsequent positivistic scrutiny (Leininger, 1992), and for this reason the issue of validity has become the most contentious issue within qualitative research (Bailey, 1997). Silverman (1993) noted that certain qualitative researchers’ complete rejection of this criticism, and the steadfastness of their own relativist stance, helped to produce a polarisation of attitudes towards the notion of validity and resultant methodological choices. Whilst the underlying precept within this research is that interpretivist, postmodern work is not obligated to the notion of validity as truth – as an examined piece of work – it must nonetheless “strive to find a way to claim legitimacy and trustworthiness without the necessity of laying claim to uncontested certainty” (Angen, 2000, p.379).

As noted by Mishler (1990) and Bailey (1997), the terms used to categorise qualitative research are themselves open to interpretation and loosely applied, inferring within each a room for epistemological manoeuvre. Certain interpretivists have contended that traditional notions of truth and objectivity should be jettisoned and that they are not bound by method (Smith, 1984), in part due to an acknowledgement that the objectivity demanded by positivists would be unachievable (Jardine, 1990; Sandelowski, 1993). However, other qualitative researchers have sought to legitimize their work by reformulating notions of validity to fit their stance, rather than rejecting it altogether (Smith, 1990). Whilst the fluidity, relationalism and context of qualitative research produces plurivocality and multiple truths which could be inhibited or obscured by a quest for 'the truth', there is a need to gain acceptance and a wider audience, which may be more achievable if accusations of unscholarly subjectivity can be prevented or nullified. To this end, the extremely opposing epistemological stances observed by Silverman (1993) need not be considered the only exclusive choices, but rather the end points of a nuanced continuum in which researchers straddle divisions which are less distinct in practice than in debate (Angen, 2000). Thus the "Cartesian split between the subjective thinker and the objective world" (ibid., p.381) is blurred.

This research is not underpinned by the assumption that knowledge must be generated by an objective distance (Heshusius, 1994), but there is observation of the positivist scrutiny of validity which focuses on methodological choices – in particular, the extent to which those choices produce findings which would be potentially repeatable (i.e. – reliability), even if not necessarily generalizable (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Whilst Kvale's (1996) 'holy trinity' of validity, reliability and generalizability inform positivism, the rejection of postpositivist objectivity, to engender plurivocality and multiple realities, may nullify the requirement for criteria for gauging validity (Woolcot, 1990). Notwithstanding this, an

extreme, 'anything goes', nihilistic relativism could undermine the research and its perception by intended readers (Silverman, 1993), and therefore this research adopts the pragmatic compromise position of 'subtle realism' (Hammersley, 1995). Whilst susceptible to accusations of inconsistency or epistemological pluralism, subtle realism contends that a semi-objective realism exists independently of the researcher, who nonetheless can document it through the lens of their personal perspective. By recasting validity as confidence rather than certainty, it is possible for phenomenology to accommodate potentially postpositivist mechanisms such as triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, declaration of the researcher's position, and member checking (Creswell, 1998) – all utilised in this research – although other mechanisms such as hypothesis testing and counting occurrences (Silverman, 1993) are here considered a step too far.

The use of any postpositivist mechanisms is not without problems. They can lead to a rigid assumption of a fixed truth (Sandelowski, 1993; Morse, 1994) and distance the researcher from the work (Heshusius, 1994) – both explicitly against the objectives of this research. Reflexivity is key to countering this by ascertaining not only the researcher's position in relation to the subject matter, but also how their position and understanding of the topic changes longitudinally (Bergum, 1991). By declaring their experiences of industry and the subject matter, the researcher increases the substantive validation of the project (Sanjek, 1990; Nielson, 1995). Triangulation is adopted here to produce both convergent and divergent meanings (Lincoln & Guba, 1988; Mathison, 1988; Silverman, 1993; Denzin, 1994), and care has been taken to prevent it – as far as possible – from obscuring context or inferring an objective reality (Silverman, 1993). Despite peer debriefing being used with the best intentions, Morse's (1994) criticisms – centred on the fact that peers can never have the equivalent level of involvement in the research – proved largely correct, and the mechanism ultimately seemed relatively unsatisfactory in this research project.

Maxwell (1992) considered a level of objectivity necessary to differentiate between different viewpoints, although this idea is problematic, as it suggests that the researcher is able to officiate and that the insights of different participants have differing levels of merit – hardly consistent with the democratisation and power balance sought in this research, or the understanding of realities as being socially constructed by “culturally informed relationships and experiences, the talk and text, of our everyday lives” (Angen, 2000, p.384). Accepting the importance of the researcher’s cultural embeddedness, and their inseparability from their knowledge and experience, as a foundation for understanding (Bernstein, 1985), all interpretations of self and others are temporal and located (Kvale, 1996), and for this reason, any attempt to separate understanding from context would be futile and misleading (Gadamer, 1994). Therefore, this social constructivist research is designed to generate deep, intersubjective meanings (Moss, 1994), and no pretence of neutrality is made, as this would deny the humanity, expertise, ability and judgment of the researcher (Haslanger, 1993). All understanding resulting from this research is partial, perspectival and ripe for reinterpretation by others (Haraway, 1988) and, as the mechanisms employed to ensure quality are themselves flexible, it may be said that they are aimed at the achievement of validation, rather than validity (Mishler, 1990) – not final or definitive (Lather, 1994), nor exhaustive or proscriptive (Smith, 1984). The ethical validation of this research is the domain of the researcher, but also of subsequent actors in the debate (Madison, 1998). In producing new theoretical connections and going beyond what was previously known, it is anticipated that the research will achieve rhizomatic validity (Lather, 1993) as part of its broader validation through time. To achieve subtle realism, and to foster credibility amongst a diverse intended audience, a pragmatic approach has been taken to applying partially positivistic quality control mechanisms to this otherwise subjective and constructivist research.

5.2.5) The decision not to use bracketing

Many hermeneutic phenomenologists (e.g. – Koch, 1995) believe bracketing impractical, maintaining that prior understanding cannot be excluded, especially if the researcher is unaware of their preconceptions, and that it is impossible for qualitative researchers to remain entirely objective (Crotty, 1996). That is the standpoint adopted here. Others believe bracketing essential (Humble & Cross, 2010), considering research hindered by unconscious preconceptions (Parahoo, 2006), and that bracketing improves validity, albeit through a process seldom explained for researchers (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013) which is often opaque and confusing (Gearing, 2004). This section explains the rationale for not using bracketing. Bracketing may be particularly relevant to research projects exploring human experience, preventing preconceptions from influencing meanings and understanding of the phenomenon (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013). The vagueness of bracketing methodology stems from lack of a unifying, agreed set of methods for undertaking it (Wall, Glenn, Mitchinson & Poole, 2004), but many writers recognise its use in reducing researcher bias and data distortion (Lopez & Willis, 2007), or ‘colouring’ of the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Hamill & Sinclair (2010) suggested to delay the literature review until after data collection and analysis, ensuring that interview questions are not framed by researchers, nor their data analysis influenced by themes imported from the literature - extremely difficult to put into practice, and impractical for this research project, which was partially aimed at ascertaining the applicability of one set of theories into another business and theoretical context. Speziale & Carpenter (2007) believed bracketing should occur before and during the research, through journaling and reflexivity, whereas Chan, Fung & Chien (2013) thought it best utilised at research proposal stage and during data collection and analysis. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which provides the framework for much qualitative research, includes no procedure for bracketing (Giorgi, 2011), potentially

widening the practice-theory gap. Whilst Giorgi (2011) believed bracketing should be undertaken by researchers, as they attempt to understand lived experiences, Caelli (2001) proposed that participants should also undertake bracketing to place aside any assumptions, particularly if participants considered the researcher to have a similar understanding to theirs. Whilst this research avoided bracketing, as the researcher's insights are of potential value, it used participant led digital member checking, when participants reflected on the phenomenon and their preconceptions of it before interview, to ensure that participants' insights were not disproportionately overshadowed by the researcher's views.

5.2.6) Practical suggestions from phenomenology

To ascertain what it means to be an employee, how it feels to carry a brand, or a staff member's reaction to an IM campaign, one must understand, through ways of being in the world which differentiate between types of employee or participant, how their competencies are enacted (Sandberg & Pinnington, 2009). In exploring relationships between actions and meanings – within an action-frame of reference – humans repeatedly seek self-justification (Silverman, 1970). Creswell (2014) suggests that, to identify insightful participants, purposive sampling be used. Furthermore, participants may be asked to suggest someone known to them who may meet the research requirements and insightfully discuss the phenomenon in a snowball sampling strategy (Polit & Hungler, 1999).

It is usually recommended by phenomenological researchers that interviews be undertaken face-to-face, as they allow the researcher to explain the research parameters, laying foundations for participant involvement (Seidman, 2006). Interviews should flow naturally from this preparation, with the researcher's interjections seeking clarification or

elaboration. Moreover, each subsequent interview may incorporate questions prompted by participant comments from previous interviews (ibid). To propagate reflexivity, silent periods should be allowed to progress, as they give participants space to gather their thoughts, emotions or opinions without feeling confined by the interview (Van Manen, 1990). The two criteria for conducting the appropriate number of interviews are 'sufficiency' (the number of participants required to represent a larger population's experience) and 'saturation' (the point where few new insights emerge from the data, as information from previous interviews is beginning to be duplicated and repeated) (Seidman, 2006). In stressing the importance of certain linguistic modes in the construction of meaning, Morgan (1980) proposed that metaphor is a cognitive coping strategy saving actors from trying to understand a complicated phenomenon in all its complexity (e.g. – "the learning organisation"). Mauthner & Doucet's (1998) VCRM delves beneath such generalisations in speech, illuminating contexts and relationships.

Thompson, Locander & Pollio (1989) gave five pieces of advice for existential-phenomenological researchers which were designed into this research methodology: (i) that researcher-participant equality be established (in the case of this research through two forms of member checking and through the loose interview structure which allows the participant to 'co-pilot'), and that dialogue be sought which describes an experience rather than resorting to abstractions (e.g. – by using "Tell me about..."); (ii) that through dialogue, the first person lived experience be provided. In particular, the researcher should ask participants about themselves, not third parties; (iii) that emic analyses - retaining participant vocabulary and autonomous interview text – be used to interpret interviews, as preconceptions resulting from the researcher's theoretical knowledge are bracketed, so an 'insider approach' is achieved; (iv) that by pursuing plurivocality through multiple interpretations of the same text – in this case, the four interpretations comprising VCRM (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) – competing interpretations emerge, forming a fuller,

more authentic picture; (v) that there must be a relationship between the meanings emerging from specific parts of the text and those derived from the text as a whole, avoiding abstraction of any parts of the text from the whole.

Sandberg & Pinnington (2009) advised the phenomenological researcher to achieve rigour in interviews through three types of validity: (i) communicative validity, where the researcher and participant give a corresponding account of the phenomenon – achievable through member checking (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011); (ii) pragmatic validity, where examples are sought from participants to illustrate statements, and misunderstandings are challenged by the interviewee; and (iii) transgressive validity, where the researcher scours texts for inconsistencies to be explored or clarified in subsequent interviews, and even deliberately gets something wrong in an interview so the participant corrects them with a more emphatic and illustrative account. Importantly for a project like this, which seeks a reconceptualisation of one strand of theory by applying elements from another, Sandberg & Pinnington (2009) encouraged researchers to exploit contradictions in the data, explaining in the analysis where meaning breaks down.

The participants listed overleaf took part in the semi-structured phenomenological interviews:

Participant	IM Context
Roger, government manager	Change of government / ID / performance measures / rationalisation. Had recent, extensive and unplanned exposure to IM. Although he had many negative experiences of IM, feeling it had been abused by his organisation, he still believed in the idea of IM, and considered it 'a way of bringing people together to work together for a mutual goal...to embrace values which work for everyone.
Stella, local government clerical assistant	Encouragement of interdepartmental exchange / strategic change management. Had recent experience of IM, but did not feel particularly strongly about it. Believed IM to be a managerial tool to develop uniformity of working practices.
Bev, bio scientist	Mergers / rationalisation. Believed in the concept of IM – considering it 'a way of getting the message out there, changing the way people approach their work, and bringing disparate sections of workers together'. Had experienced several recent cycles of IM, and had largely positive experiences, with one experience only of extremely poorly managed IM.
Desmond, primary school teacher	Takeover / strategic change management. Was not entirely sure what IM entailed or encapsulated, but thought it concerned 'selling the organisation to the staff' in some way. His recent, low-level experiences of IM had left him relatively unimpressed, due to its haphazard, part-time nature.
Arthur, fast food restaurant Team Leader	(mainly operational) Arthur appreciated the potential of IM, which he believed could enrich the working lives of staff by giving them a common purpose, and lead to commercial gains for the organisation, but had disappointing experiences of lacklustre IM.
Jessie, university academic	Strategic change management / IM campaign. Jessie had a well-developed understanding of IM, and was accepting of it, but was very cynical about the way in which she had seen it used at work in a way to disguise or 'sell' changes which she felt detrimental.
Esther, university administrator	Strategic change management / rationalisation. Esther was relatively unsure of what IM entailed, but had been exposed to much communication recently which she felt partially well-intentioned and partially disingenuous.
Hamish, Public Sector senior manager	Change of government / rationalisation / conflict / their implementation of strategy. Hamish considered IM a range of strategies, and a managerial mindset, focused on 'improving the values and ethos of the organisation', but felt hampered in his attempts to use IM by short-termism and government intervention.
Eddie, Regional Manager for major manufacturer	(mainly operational) Eddie had retired recently, and considered himself 'a bit old school, but always up for change where it makes good sense'. He cautiously welcomed IM, but considered some of it 'a bit fluffy and inconsequential', especially within the context of the 'relatively macho, old-fashioned' industry in which he worked.
Janet, university cleaner	(mainly operational) Janet was unsure of what IM is, and perceived it as selling

	something to staff. She felt neutral towards it.
Lizzie, Marketing Manager for employee-owned SME	Mainly operational, but with their implementation of local initiatives. Lizzie had a highly developed sense of what IM is and embraced it everyday in her work. She felt that it could engender an inclusive environment, above all else.
Gary, Insurance company senior manager	Their implementation of strategy / conflict & resistance. Gary was positively inclined towards IM, though as a leader of IM before his retirement he had experienced both enthusiasm and extreme resistance from his staff, which had given him a very balanced view of it.
Tom, senior gas engineer	(mainly operational) Tom understood IM in terms of his parent company enculturating its constituent companies, more at an organisational than individual level, and felt quite neutrally about it.
Owen, trainer for energy charity	Staff/manager negotiation. Owen fully embraced IM, seeing it as a valuable way to spread the values and messages of his organisation, in a field which needs to be inclusive and 'reach out to as many stakeholders as possible'.
Winifred, CEO of charity	Implementation of new initiatives. Winifred was evangelistic about the possibilities of IM, and had much the most altruistic attitude towards it, implementing a large programme out of genuine concern for her workers.

Table 3: Interview participants.

5.3) Summary of Chapter 5

This chapter has covered the philosophical underpinnings of the research and how they influence the methodological choices and analysis. The ontological, epistemological and theoretical perspectives have been critiqued, and their academic traditions discussed. Justification has been provided for the adoption of phenomenology, and its philosophical concepts examined. The decision not to employ bracketing, although central to many phenomenological studies, has been explored both conceptually and in the context of this research.

The following chapter analyses the methodological choices and their appropriateness to this project. The approach to reviewing the extant literature is discussed. There then

follows an explanation of the strategies employed to ensure research rigour and credibility – peer debriefing, member checking, negative case analysis, and a new form of digital member checking based upon netnography. The importance of reflexivity is considered, and the significance of casting the researcher-as-instrument. Justification is given for the sampling and interview strategies, then an account of how Template Analysis of the pilot interview was utilised to identify key themes, and VCRM to analyse the data and empower participants. There is a discussion of the use of a focus group, before scrutinising the ethical issues inherent, identifying limitations presented by the methodological choices, and opportunities for future research.

Chapter 6) Research methodology and methods

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This chapter sets out the methodological choices, discussing their suitability to this research and their implementation.

6.1) Reviewing the literature

Consistent with the recommendations of Caulley (1992), reviewing the literature defined the research topic, giving theoretical, practical and historical context and informing methodological decisions. It helped prevent duplication of previous studies, providing the knowledge to which findings relate during analysis. By comparing findings of different

authors, a thematic analysis was constructed of the academic debate underpinning this study (Oliver, 2012), highlighting the theoretical gap and justifying the research (Fink, 2009). The literature review changed several times in focus as fruitful lines of inquiry presented themselves.

IM suffers an identity crisis – over its membership of Marketing or HRM (Varey & Lewis, 1999). The common differentiation, that IM is non-coercive (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993), bounds this research. The review was slightly more narrative (Jesson, 2011) than systematic, as it was neither necessary nor practical to exhaust every source (Tranfield, Denyer & Smart, 2003). There was a two-pronged approach to the chronology of the literature, working forward from older, ‘seminal’ sources to subsequent works informed by them, and backwards from the newest articles, using their reference lists as ‘springboards’ into influential sources.

The main secondary data sources were academic journal articles. Recency of articles was important, to join the current academic debate (Horn, 2012). Articles were usually taken from double blind-peer reviewed journals to ensure reliability, ‘prestige’ and ‘impact’, although it was sometimes desirable to use lower ranked journals which concentrate on specific research foci more directly relevant to this study (Myers, 2013). Furthermore, many methodological articles (discussing researcher reflexivity, narrative inquiry and emancipatory research) were from medical journals, whilst several articles on employee relationships were from Social and Occupational Psychology journals. The two major search engines used to perform Boolean searches were NORA (Northumbria University’s system) and Google Scholar. A Zetoc Alert was set up to find any new, relevant articles. Whilst few text books were available on the focal subject, many more informed methodological matters and epistemology, recency being less critical here. It is through immersion in methodological literature that the research has reinterpreted

'autonetnography' (Kozinets, 2010) from researcher-led data collection strategy to naïve, participant-led pre-interview technique, to undertake member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) pre-emptively, reflecting the evolving importance of social media and digital communications (Hine, 2000).

6.2) Choosing the research design and selecting a methodology

The review of the literature highlighted a need to research employees' lived experiences (Ahrens & Khalifa, 2013) of IM, which had been neglected. Therefore, empirical, rather than purely theoretical, research was required (Baker, 2001). As the research phenomenon demanded exploration of participants' emotions (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003), a methodology able to unearth 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973; Takhar & Chitakunye, 2012), and probe participants' unconscious knowledges (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), was appropriate. The ontological presuppositions – of Social Constructionism (Cunliffe, 2008) and 'multiple truths' – dictated an interpretivistic, rather than hypothetico-deductive, approach (Baker, 2001). Anticipated findings are both abstract (opinions, experiences, emotions and narratives) and concrete (background conditions). Where causation is occasionally suggested (for example, that the tone of an internal communication has caused an employee to feel under-valued), this is tentative and probabilistic rather than deterministic. Theory will therefore be built, rather than tested. Moreover, by giving primacy to the subject matter rather than the method (Flick, 2009), and studying the phenomenon from the insider's point of view rather than from a detached, pseudo-scientific standpoint (i.e. – emic, rather than etic) a subjectivist paradigm and qualitative methodology is adopted (Creswell, 2014). The researcher seeks not complete impartiality, but empathy with participants and achievement of 'emancipatory' outcomes wherever appropriate (Oliver, 1997). Therefore, pluralism and complexity are sought rather than consensus, albeit whilst searching for emergent patterns (Silverman, 2013).

The time constraints of a doctoral research project (Trafford & Leshem, 2008; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012; Horn, 2012) prevent pure ethnography with prolonged immersion in the field (Fetterman, 2009; Denzin, 2014), therefore semi-structured phenomenological interviews were undertaken (King & Horrocks, 2010; Creswell, 2014). The research was intended to contextualise, portray, interpret and understand the actors' perspectives, rather than generalise, make predictions, or establish causality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). As such, the research should be naturalistic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), not tightly manipulated, in its execution and focus. The study is inductive and uses the researcher as instrument, and the write-up is descriptive, with little use of numerical information (Mason, 2002). Nonetheless, several mechanisms were chosen to address concerns regarding reliability, validity and 'rigour' often levelled at qualitative researchers by positivists (Kvale, 1994), as the research must achieve credibility across a wide audience to have desired impact.

6.3) Research quality, rigour and credibility

As no exhaustive criteria for judging 'quality' in qualitative research exist (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008), and 'trustworthiness' lacks definition against a subjective paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), 'quality' is often broken into subsidiary concepts such as 'transparency' (Angrosino, 2007), 'impact' (HEFCE, 2011) and the 'transferability' of findings outside the participant sample (Flick, 2009). Agar (1986) posited that 'reliability' and 'validity' are solely applicable to positivists - concerned with generalizability. Instead, alternative concepts such as 'credibility', 'accuracy of representation' and 'authority of the writer' are sought here. As Krefting (1991) asserted, phenomenology conveys experience, so the "*inappropriateness of quantitative criteria in the assessment of qualitative research [is] important to the understanding of any model of trustworthiness of qualitative research*" (p.215).

To demonstrate rigour (Barbour, 2001) and produce knowledge for academics and practitioners (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012), this research adopts (i) a research design fitting the phenomenon studied (Horn, 2012); (ii) a data collection strategy manageable within the timeframe but comprehensive enough to generate “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973); (iii) structured methods of interpreting the data, providing insights and relevance to a wide readership. Therefore, an account of the data collection and analysis strategies is provided against the wider philosophical context because, whilst a useful guide, “the uncritical adoption of a range of “technical fixes”...does not, in itself, confer rigour [and] will achieve little unless they are embedded in a broader understanding of the rationale and assumptions behind qualitative research” (Barbour, 2001, p. 1115).

This research should also help practitioners (Riessman, 1993). Whilst exploratory, it is not intended solely as a foundation for further inquiry, but to be ‘fruitful’ (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) in creating a self-contained product, ‘insightful’ (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998) and ‘theory-building’ in creating knowledge or reinterpreting existing knowledge. Corley & Gioia (2011) noted that, whilst theoretical contributions could occur through ‘originality’ (new knowledge) and/or ‘utility’ (practical application of findings), ‘utility’ itself should lead to ‘prescience’ – the provision of knowledge allowing foresight, understanding and effective management of a phenomenon. Therefore, this research contributes by providing policy-makers with insights on which to base IM decisions.

Rigour in qualitative research may benefit from negative case analysis and peer debriefing (e.g. – Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cooper, Brandon & Lindberg, 1998), keeping research journals (e.g. – Flick, 2009; Silverman, 2013), through reflexivity (e.g. – Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Doyle, 2012; Basit, 2013), prolonged fieldwork (e.g. – Geertz, 1973; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Fetterman, 2009), and by ‘member checking’ or ‘participant feedback’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bradbury-Jones, Irvine & Sambrook, 2010; Harper &

Cole, 2012). Whilst time constraints preclude elongated fieldwork, the other strategies above were used. Additionally, this research reinterprets autonethnography (Kozinets, 1997; 2010), applying it as a semi-naïve, participant-led, pre-interview technique to identify themes and encourage participant reflexivity. This contributes to the field of qualitative inquiry, helping achieve rigour through triangulation.

Guba & Lincoln (1989) proposed eight concepts relating to researcher bias, and five principles appertaining to authenticity, explored by Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins (2008) and subsequently clarified by Frels & Onwuegbuzie (2012), who designed specific questions for peer debriefers to identify bias and authenticity. These are adapted here as a quality control mechanism, to prompt both peer debriefer and researcher – to demonstrate, researcher reflections on bias in the pilot interview are given in Appendix 1. Researcher reflections on authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), using Frels & Onwuegbuzie's (2012) subsequent questions, are included in Appendix 2.

Guba (1981) proposed alternative criteria for judging research rigour, centred on 'trustworthiness'. Different criteria were proposed for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative and quantitative research. The four aspects constituting trustworthiness in qualitative research – 'truth value', 'applicability', 'consistency' and 'neutrality' – guide this research, as follows:

- 'Truth Value' – the researcher's confidence in the truthfulness of the findings in the research context – is engendered by the research design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and should focus on participants' accounts of their experiences rather than being generated *a priori* by the researcher. In naturalistic inquiry (Creswell, 2014) embracing multiple truths (Hatch, 2002), this involves the adequate representation

of multiple realities (Krefting, 1991), which Lincoln & Guba (1985) termed 'credibility'. The recognisability of experiences portrayed to others sharing those experiences is central to 'credibility' (Sandelowski, 1986). The criteria employed to achieve credibility are member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); peer debriefing (ibid.; Basit, 2013); researcher reflexivity via a field journal (Forbes, 2013; Silverman, 2013); participant reflexivity via reinterpretation of autonethnography (Kozinets, 1997; 2010); semi-structured interviews and open-ended questioning which allows participant freedom (Angrosino, 2007; Neuman, 2013); and 'structural coherence' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Krefting, 1991, p.21) between the data and its analysis.

- 'Applicability' is how well research findings may be transferred across contexts, or generalisability from the sample to a larger population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Krefting, 1991). This concept is contentious, with Sandelowski (1986) arguing that naturalistic inquiry has few controlling variables, producing results infinitesimally different from those produced elsewhere, making generalisation impossible (and undesirable). However, Guba's (1981) alternative perspective proposes 'fittingness' and 'transferability' to gauge transferability of findings to new contexts. He considered these dependent not on the person using existing knowledge for new purposes, but on the initial researcher producing that knowledge. The main criterium employed here to achieve transferability is the provision of dense information on the participants and the research context (Krefting, 1991), allowing future users to decide whether the research is suitable for their purposes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It was unnecessary to use the other major criterion – nominated sampling, where a panel of experts select participants by their representativeness of a larger population (Field & Morse, 1985) – as this would deny the significant benefits of purposive sampling, such as the ability to select previously known

participants who are particularly suitable for interview due to their experiences or dispositions.

- 'Consistency' is how well the findings would be repeated if the research were conducted afresh with the same participants or in a similar context, and depends heavily upon the potential replication of the results, to demonstrate reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interpretivist notion of multiple truths and lack of controlling variables is problematic, necessitating different criteria to those used by positivists (Field & Morse, 1985). Therefore, Guba (1981) accepts variability and defines consistency by the research dependability. "Sources of variability" (ibid; Krefting, 1991, p. 216), such as a participant's specific circumstances, are declared, allowing the reader to decide on its relevance to their needs. This lets the researcher explain not just average or typical experiences, but non-normative emotions and phenomena (Krefting, 1991), producing data analysis defining the boundaries of experience, and exploring the 'richness' of data. This research employs "stepwise replication technique" (ibid), whereby other researchers are asked to check how closely their analyses relates to those here (Guba, 1981). Additionally, parts of the coding and analysis were repeated several weeks after the original exercise and results compared (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Further triangulation is achieved using several data collection and analysis methods.
- 'Neutrality' is Guba's (1981) final measure of trustworthiness, encouraging findings which emanate from research participants and conditions alone rather than extrinsic factors – a lack of bias in the undertaking of the research and production of results (Sandelowski, 1986). In contrast to quantitative research, which seeks to establish objectivity by creating distance between researcher and participants through randomisation and other procedural considerations, qualitative research

seeks to decrease this distance through longitudinality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, the criterion for ensuring neutrality in qualitative research is confirmability, achieved by establishing applicability and truth value (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991). This research seeks to be confirmable by providing an 'audit trail' detailing the research process, justifying decisions, and demonstrating that other qualitative researchers would make comparable interpretations and recommendations, should they research the area anew (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln & Guba's (1985) categorisation of auditable records includes field notes, audio recordings, researcher journals, interpretations and codes, and these were the principal materials delivering confirmability.

6.3.1) Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing enhances validity and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Weiss, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Maxwell, 1996; Creswell, 1998) or "truth value" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301); addresses the subjectivity of qualitative "researcher-as-instrument" (Spillett, 2003, p. 35); and gives critical analysis of the research process (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009); to instil researcher reflexivity (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2012); and for the following reasons (Lincoln & Guba, 1985):

- (i) to identify researcher biases and challenges underlying research assumptions;
- (ii) to build researcher awareness of 'posture' towards data, its collection and analysis;
- (iii) to propose emerging themes and concepts to a peer, testing their robustness;
- (iv) to provide catharsis and researcher self-development. Peer debriefing helped check that transcripts retained integrity with interviews without under- or over-emphasis or vagueness in the analysis;

- (v) and to suggest alternative interpretations. The most important contribution of peer debriefing to this research was to ensure ‘authenticity’, which qualitative researchers offer incrementally to quantitative counterparts as an alternative to generalisability by scaling up (Scandura & Williams, 2000).

To submit research to peer debriefing is to seek fresh perspectives from an “impartial” (Spillett, 2003, p. 35) detached third party or “disinterested peer” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308), to challenge aspects otherwise “implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (ibid p.308) – for the ‘investigator’ (Chenail, 2011) or ‘researcher’ (Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2008) to be interviewed. Denzin & Lincoln (1994, p. 513) identified its value in increasing “the credibility of a project”. Therefore, to ensure research ‘rigour’, and freedom from preconceptions or researcher limitations (Hendricks, 2006) – important where “the investigator has a strong affinity for the participants being studied or is a member of the population itself” (Chenail, 2011, p. 255) – the strategy is adopted here. A debriefer should be knowledgeable in the research topic and a “sounding board” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 222) but not a stakeholder in the project outcome (Hail, Hurst & Camp, 2011). Therefore, doctoral programme staff and supervisors may not fulfil this role. However, doctorally qualified colleagues and academic peers have proven suitable.

Whilst peer debriefing is open to interpretation in certain key articles on its role (e.g. – Spillett, 2003; Cooper, Brandon & Lindberg, 1998) – problematic when pursuing validity (Barber & Walczak, 2009) – researchers have identified key criteria for debriefer selection:

- (i) they should share the researcher’s paradigm to understand the research requirements and limitations, enabling the researcher to ‘identify’ with their comments (Spall, 1998);

- (ii) they should be trusted to be critical and fair (Spall, 1998; Spillett, 2003), being relied upon to add value to projects through their experience and professional judgment;
- (iii) they must be available and willing to contribute. Consistent with the findings of Spall (1998), trust underpinned selection of debriefers, the collaborative work was focused on research methodology, and the chief benefit was the continuous improvement in research skills. Although compensating debriefers financially or with co-author credits may engender greater input, thus bolstering credibility (Barber & Walczak, 2009), it was impossible and unnecessary here.

Debrief meetings use neutral venues conducive to reflection (Hail, Hurst & Camp, 2011). This research employed a task-oriented strategy, using debriefing only at critical points. Although Spillett (2003), categorised such peers as 'insider' or 'outsider' debriefers (or on a continuum between the two), depending on their familiarity with the research topic, such a distinction appears less clear in doctoral research, as researchers in other fields may be closer in methodological focus and experience than those researching one's own field. However, she suggested that mixing 'insider' and 'outsider' debriefers may provide complementary input, and that multiple, reciprocal debriefing could produce "a synergistic interplay of ideas and experiences" (ibid, p. 36), and this was the case when undertaken within the peer support groups (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz, 1991) informally occurring within the NBS doctoral community – during the pilot interview design, coding and analysis (King & Horrocks, 2010), and throughout data collection and analysis, debriefing was not limited to research advice, but embraced 'coping strategies', encouragement, motivation and emotional support.

Hendricks (2006) suggested that an advantage of peer debriefing is increasing the accuracy of research analysis and findings, although 'accuracy' is ill-defined. Likewise, her identification of peer debriefing as a safeguard against 'researcher bias' perhaps requires some qualification, given that certain aspects of 'bias' may legitimately underpin a researcher's philosophical presuppositions (e.g. – Peshkin, 1988; Denzin, 1998; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Hammersley & Gomm, 2000), at least when declared. Lincoln & Guba (1985) clarified that its scope for reducing bias lay in interview data interpretation, developing new concepts and practices with peers, and promoting researcher reflexivity and stakeholder collaboration (Hendricks, 2006). Validity is unachievable simply through peer debriefing, but is dependent on its outcome (Maxwell, 1996). Therefore, details of debriefing sessions have been recorded.

6.3.2) Member Checking

Member checking (or 'participant feedback' or 'respondent validation') may be undertaken longitudinally or at isolated points like follow-up interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Doyle, 2007; Bradbury-Jones, Irvine & Sambrook, 2010; Harper & Cole, 2012), and involves research participants commenting upon the accuracy with which they consider their comments have been represented (Creswell, 2009). Like peer evaluation, it constitutes 'consensual validation' (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998), where intersubjective meaning is agreed by multiple perceptions of reality. Lincoln & Guba (1985) considered this useful in securing research credibility: to guard against participants subsequently claiming misrepresentation; to collect additional information which the participant may have overlooked during the initial data collection; to judge the participant's intention in providing certain information; for participants to contest perceived misinterpretations and make revisions; to crystallise or clarify points made during initial data collection; and to judge the information adequacy. Corben (1999) noted the usefulness of member checks

in validating findings derived from thematic analysis, whilst Doyle (2007) explained their ability to triangulate perspectives, negotiating meaning cooperatively.

Some articles have questioned whether such participant ratification is reliable (e.g. – McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis, 2011), and if it could, in the case of participant disagreement, undermine validity (Ashworth, 1993). As interviews are representative of specific moments in time – particularly for the postmodernist researcher embracing Derrida's (tr. Lawlor, 2011) concept of the temporo-spatial nature of language – asking participants to agree findings may have no more relevance than asking a third party (i.e. – peer debriefing) (Lillibridge, Cox & Cross, 2002). Webb (2003) suggests that alternative interpretations produced through peer debriefing or member checking do not diminish the researcher's interpretation, which is validated by their belief in its plausibility, but merely offer an additional interpretation. Moreover, participants may become unreliable in undertaking member checking, because of forgetfulness or regret over what had been said or through reluctance to contradict the researcher (Sandelowski, 2002). For these reasons, member checking may be utilised for error reduction rather than data verification (Mays & Pope, 2006).

McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis (2011) pose an 'overarching question' of relevance to interpretivist researchers, asking "how the researcher will know when the 'right' interpretation has surfaced" (p.30). Their description of Lincoln & Guba's (1985) call for validation as illogical within an interpretive paradigm, as "there is no directive in interpretive research to prove or generalise" (p.30), may be over-simplistic when producing research intended as adoptable by industry practitioners. However, member checking may clash with phenomenology by assuming data analysis should produce 'one truth', and it does not satisfactorily account for participants' unconscious production of meaning. Therefore, its role is limited here to eradicating misunderstandings, letting

participants comment on how representative they believe their comments are to colleagues and peers (improving internal validity), and ensuring engagement within the field is sufficiently prolonged to build fair and realistic understandings of the phenomenon (Rubin & Babbie, 2010).

Notwithstanding these considerations, this research uses member checking because collaborative approaches between researcher and participant – consensual construction of knowledge – are sought. The blurring of researcher-participant boundaries, and the notion of researcher-as-instrument (e.g. – Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 2002; Janesick, 2008), are recognised here. Many of the limitations listed above are addressed by ensuring minimal time between data collection and member checking – via follow-up interviews, and the use of open-ended, probing follow-up questions within initial interviews, which clarify participant comments and/or confirm researcher interpretations during the interview itself. The seeking of participant verification during initial interviews – via open-ended probing questions, repeating and rephrasing of participant comments, and inviting non-specific comments – is usually not considered member checking but interview technique. However, just as Schön's (1984) "Reflection in Action" theory applied a post-event practice in the event itself, there appears little reason why member checking cannot be applied similarly.

Although member checking during the initial interview demands interviewer skill and concentration, and swift follow-up interviews create time constraints during the transcription and analysis phase, participants are less likely to perceive misrepresentation or act upon regret, and participant comments are received early enough to influence subsequent data collection stages, promoting validity and engendering credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Where a participant is sufficiently assertive, trusting and open, the 'confrontation style' of member checking, in which the participant is challenged within a

debate and encouraged to respond strongly (Tanggaard, 2008), is adopted in follow-up interviews. This is a similar approach to phenomenological questioning, in which the researcher deliberately states a fact in an obviously incorrect way, knowing this will incite a more detailed and specific response (Creswell, 2009). However, where the participant feels overwhelmed or threatened, then the 'dialogue and power' style is employed, where equality and collaboration between both parties address any inherent power struggles within the interview dialogue (Tanggaard, 2008). All participants are supplied with their interview transcripts, an explanation of the analytical methods used, and the analysis, and invited to comment and suggest amendments.

Additional to member checks with the original participants, this research seeks verification of early interview findings during later interviews. Whilst member checking may fail to eliminate bias, member checking with subsequent participants allows the researcher to establish the extent to which original findings are applicable to others in similar situations and congruent with their experiences, establishing transferability (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2006). As participants, unlike the researcher, lack training in data analysis, and because the research builds knowledge which participants would otherwise not have constructed, the researcher must lead when deciding upon the following:

- (i) what should be checked;
- (ii) with whom it should be checked;
- (iii) the level of collaboration;
- (iv) definitions of 'agreement' and 'disagreement'; and
- (v) how 'disagreement' should be addressed and reconciled.

However, the process should share power between researcher and participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

6.3.3) Negative Case Analysis

Negative case analysis interprets a “*case that does not fit the pattern [in terms of the] action / interaction / emotional response of others being studied*” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.84), helping this research establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2014). Whilst identifying such a case allows the researcher to propose alternative views and explanations, it would not usually undermine their overall conceptualisation, but represent a dimensional extreme (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In searching for “negative instances” (Mason, 2002, p.133), scrutiny of participants whose experience or position is somehow ‘peripheral’ may be necessary. Adopting such a technique perhaps increases the research’s emancipatory nature by giving a voice to otherwise marginalised participants, revealing concealed possibilities and being less entrenched in its subjective positionality (Wolgemuth & Donohue, 2006). Whilst most evidence emerging from interviews supports a theme, the presentation of contradictory evidence adds credibility and perspective (Creswell, 2014), so this research presents comments and observations which may be deemed outliers.

6.3.4) Reinterpretation of Autonetnography as participant-led, pre-interview Member Checking technique.

As this research is intended to empower participants to speak about their own experiences, and the emotions relating to these experiences may have been processed and packed away, there is a need to enable participants to dig deep beneath their most memorable or superficial reactions. As IM should be a longitudinal process with multiple interpersonal touch points, it is potentially valuable to stimulate recollections of long gone

events, rather than risk them being overshadowed by an availability heuristic (Cialdini, 1993) engendered by recency. Whilst it is neither necessary nor desirable to remove the researcher from the research frame, the data collection and analysis strategy has been designed to address any researcher-participant power imbalances as this is seen to democratise the process, facilitate greater degrees of participant reflexivity, and respect the underlying philosophy of the research – that the tacit, interpersonal experiences of multiple stakeholders within IM are as important as the formalised, organisational outcomes achieved by their employers. For this reason, and to reflect the increasing proliferation of digital media used by people to reflect upon their experiences and express identity (e.g. – Hine, 2000), the member checking process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) has been extended through the reinterpretation of autonethnography (Kozinets, 1997) in a way which longitudinalises participant perspectives. The development of this technique, its potential benefits and limitations, are detailed in this section.

The concept of autonethnography (Kozinets, 1997; 2010) derives from autoethnography (e.g. – Hayano, 1979; Coffey, 1999; Bochner & Ellis, 2006) – a self-reflective research method where an understanding of the researcher helps create understanding of their wider ‘culture’ (Ellis, 2004) or ‘people’ (Geertz, 1973). More specifically, it derives from netnography (Kozinets, 1997), elsewhere termed ‘virtual ethnography’ (e.g. – Hine, 2000; Crichton & Kinash, 2003; Driscoll & Gregg, 2010; Pastinelli, 2011); ‘Ethnography 2.0’ (White, 2009); ‘digital ethnography’ (Murthy, 2008; Sandercock & Attili, 2010; Underberg & Zorn, 2013; Cardullo, 2014); ‘online ethnography’ (e.g. – Gatson, 2011); ‘connective ethnography’ (Dirksen, Huizing & Smit, 2010); ‘webnography’ (Puri, 2007); and ‘webethnography’ (Prior & Miller, 2012). These use digital, connective, online technologies to undertake ethnographic research, especially of ‘online communities’ or ‘tribes’ (Kozinets, 1997). Therefore, ‘autonethnography’ (Kozinets, 2010) uses ‘netnography’ (Kozinets, 1997) to undertake autoethnography, focusing on the researcher’s ‘digital

tribes' (Kozinets, 2010). For example, an author researching the 'extreme tattoo' community might do so through their own membership and usage of a Multi-User Domain (MUD) or social networking site catering to such an audience, and their interactions and experiences within it that community, imbuing the study with researcher reflexivity and 'researcher insiderness' (Wray & Bartholomew, 2012).

This thesis proposes and uses a re-interpretation of autonethnography (Kozinets, 2010) to produce a new research technique which, rather than being an expert undertaking as the main data collection strategy (e.g. – Hine, 2000; Cardullo, 2014), is undertaken by the participant as a semi-naïve, pre-interview process, the benefits being:

- (i) to encourage participant reflexivity by inviting them to focus on their experiences prior to interview;
- (ii) to improve interview fluency by reducing the warming-up or breaking-in phase (King & Horrocks, 2010);
- (iii) to identify a priori themes which are not only verified, but generated, by participants, thus forming part of the wider member checking process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985);
- (iv) to explore the boundaries between researcher, field and participant, increasing researcher-participant intersubjectivity;
- (v) to address researcher-participant imbalances of power in terms of decision-making and direction, democratising the research relationship, to "encourage disclosure and authenticity" (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009, p. 279);
- (vi) to facilitate for participants an 'emancipatory' process of self-discovery (Barnes, 2003) achieved through 'reciprocity', 'gain' and 'empowerment' (Oliver, 1997).

Notwithstanding these benefits, the technique poses several limitations:

- (i) the participant would almost certainly not be a trained researcher, and would perhaps apply unwanted interpretations, perhaps generating 'tainted' themes. Therefore, participants would be given brief instruction by the researcher in reflecting upon the themes without applying third party interpretations;
- (ii) although the technique aims to elicit more authentic, substantiated responses in interviews, encouraging participants to be driven by evidence, it may inadvertently make their responses too cognitive, when affective, unconscious or 'naïve' responses are of greater worth to the researcher;
- (iii) whereas a researcher can make a partially detached judgment on the divergence between a participant's offline ('real life') and online ('virtual') personality, identity and communications (Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2010), participants may be less able, and possibly unwilling, to do this, perhaps resulting in themes being proposed which are representative of an online reality but not an offline one – something difficult to detect until further research has enabled triangulation of data;
- (iv) when requested that others undertake the technique, there is a possible grey area regarding the researcher's responsibility for safeguarding the anonymity of participants' online correspondents and ensuring confidentiality of sensitive information divulged to participants. As the researcher is 'one person removed' from the research, they risk losing control of certain ethical safeguards, and this risk must be mitigated by thorough briefing of the participant to prevent third parties' online privacy being breached;
- (v) the ephemerality of many online communications, whilst encouraging recency of source data, may weaken the themes through lack of historical data, so the

researcher should ask the participant to consider themes emerging from the technique within a broader context;

- (vi) where the online communications are subject to third party moderation (e.g. – blogs), the participants' ability to express themselves fully may have been hampered by a need to evade third party censorship, thereby rendering the communications less 'authentic' (e.g. – in tone, language or content), so the conditions under which communications were made must be understood;
- (vii) the uniformity of major social media communication structures (e.g. – the Twitter word limit) and inherent social 'netiquette' conventions (Kozinets, 2010) (e.g. – unwritten rules regarding what constitutes social acceptability online), may stifle and obscure certain themes but, through contrast, lend prominence to other data;
- (viii) as a 'deviant case' is more likely to be 'heard above the background noise' of digital communication, the most salient findings of online research are possibly the least generalizable.

Due to these potential benefits, the inherent limitations and time necessary to mitigate against them, the technique was employed within the pilot exercise to enable the participant to identify key themes, helping shape the content of subsequent interviews. The pilot interview was then subjected to Template Analysis, to identify further themes for subsequent exploration – themselves analysed using Mauthner & Doucet's (1998) 'Voice-Centred Relational Method'. Therefore, the new technique contributes to the field of qualitative inquiry, acting as a triangulation technique for the collection and analysis of primary data. This innovation – or 'adaptation' (Wiles, Crow & Pain, 2011) – is primarily for practical reasons, but serves a secondary moral and ethical function in its participant enfranchisement and empowerment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It also addresses the

situation whereby “participation in analysis is often neglected” (Nind, 2011, pp. 349) relative to recent increases in participatory research methods (ibid).

6.3.5) Researcher reflexivity

Alvesson & Skoldberg (2009) maintained that researcher reflexivity is essential in understanding the interconnections between the knowledge production processes and contexts hosting them, including the researcher role (Woolgar, 1988), which begins with scrutiny of the researcher’s attitudes and values relating to the research (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). Reflexivity entails self-criticality which commences before the research and continues throughout and afterwards, focusing the researcher on how their experiences or presuppositions affect the research. Diaries, research logs and accounts of progress are useful tools, as is peer debriefing. Postmodernist researchers may not simply use these to refine their research but present them with the findings to demonstrate how believable their work is (Gomm, 2009), thus demonstrating ‘credibility’.

Moustakas (1994) interpreted reflexivity as a holistic aspect of research methodology, rather than something isolated as tactical actions. Meanwhile, feminist writers have emphasised either the value of reflexivity in understanding the subordination of participants (e.g. – Parr, 1998), offering emancipation (Brewis & Wray-Bliss, 2003), or its contribution to the researcher’s identity (e.g. – Birch, 1998).

6.3.6) The ‘researcher-as-instrument’

As the researcher identified with the experiences of several participants (Mehra, 2012), the notion of ‘researcher-as-instrument’ was present (e.g. – Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton,

2002; Janeesick, 2008), being rooted in the ontological and epistemological commitments. Such 'insiderness' (Wray & Bartholomew, 2012) may influence the research design, execution and analysis (Law, 2004) – the research may not be about the researcher, but goes 'through' the researcher (Piantanida & Garman, 1999). This creates potential for researcher mental discomfort or unpreparedness, or inappropriate interview conduct, potentially undermining the truth value and introducing bias (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). By conducting "naturalistic or discovery-oriented inquiries [through] study-specific questions" (Chenail, 2011, pp. 255), the researcher has been an instrument for the collection and generation of data, by facilitating interview fluency, identifying cues and helping participants to relax (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003).

Chenail (2011) suggested that this issue be addressed by interviewing the researcher (with the questions being asked by another researcher or by oneself), but this was rejected as it would unnecessarily push him to the fore. Therefore, peer debriefing, and the triangulation of Template Analysis with the pre-emptive member checking technique were instead used after the pilot interview, allowing researcher reflexivity and for subsequent interviews to progress naturally. Nonetheless, Chenail's (2011) checklist of discussion areas for interviews of the researcher were adopted for use in peer debriefing sessions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These were: (i) researcher's emotions and opinions arising during interviews; (ii) understanding the difficulties of sharing knowledge; (iii) identifying researcher perspectives which may introduce bias; (iv) the role of patience in interviews; (v) identifying the sense of being heard or not heard; (vi) appreciating participant vulnerability; (vii) uncovering a priori assumptions about the participants. This approach heeds Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day's (2012) call for "enhanced self-reflexivity [rather than] standardization of interviewer practices" (pp. 165).

6.4) Data collection – semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured phenomenological interviews were the main data collection strategy for this research, due to their flexibility (King & Horrocks, 2010), theoretical sensitivity to participant needs (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), ability to generate large amounts of detailed, 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973), tendency to reduce interviewer bias (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013) and their suitability for qualitative data analysis (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2003). Whilst quantitative research aims to allocate numerical values to answers, providing coded data for statistical analysis and therefore relying on eliciting brief, guided responses to closed questions (Neuman, 2013), qualitative interviews allow participant responses to be highly differentiated, individualised and personal (Flick, 2009). Moreover, the researcher is afforded freedom to adapt to responses whilst each interview is in progress, pursuing fruitful lines of inquiry evoked by unanticipated participant comments (Orr & Bennett, 2009). These characteristics lend themselves to exploration of phenomena, feelings, emotions, meanings, perceptions, understandings, and other conceptualisations (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), hence their suitability here. The exploratory but contextualised nature of semi-structured interviews, with their emphasis on process, fits the research project, which uses induction for analysis of data.

Notwithstanding the above benefits, it has been necessary to guard against certain pitfalls:

- (i) given freedom of expression, participants may exaggerate, posture, over- or under-emphasise points, stray from the topic, misrepresent themselves, give responses coloured by undeclared presuppositions, or be evasive (Kvale, 1994). Therefore, the pilot and early interviews were with participants known to the researcher and considered very unlikely to exhibit the above behaviours, whilst 'snowball' selection of participants thereafter helped mitigate those risks

by providing a further wave of participants perceived by the 'seed' participants as having similar levels of openness (Heckathorn, 2011);

(ii) inexperienced interviewers may be tempted to infer cause and effect, which should be resisted. This led Pope & Mays (2006) to suggest that qualitative data analysis is so dependent upon the researcher's integrity and skill, that it is unsuited to novices. Whilst the temptation to draw unsubstantiated conclusions may arise at the data analysis stage (Pope & Mays, 2006), it can also lead interviewers astray within interviews, given the freedom for them to be influenced by a participant response (Flick, 2009). This was mitigated by first reading the interview transcripts of experienced qualitative researchers to become familiarised with the rhythms and structure of semi-structured interviews;

(iii) answers derived from open-ended questions may be problematic to analyse (Mitchell & Jolley, 2013). Furthermore, it may be difficult to demonstrate analytical rigour in a field like Business and Marketing, in which qualitative research is often judged against pseudo-positivist criteria (Barbour, 2001). However, adopting Mauthner & Doucet's (1998) VCRM analysis provides a structure demonstrating the process is neither haphazard nor improvisational.

6.5) Interview quantity & sampling strategy

Interviews were expected to last approximately 45 minutes, but could progress until new insights failed to emerge. Therefore, some interviews were considerably longer. Whilst theoretical saturation – where subsequent interviews bear negligible incremental insights

– is referred to frequently in methodological sources (e.g. – Morse, 1995; Byrne, 2001), most academics have deemed it unquantifiable (e.g. – Miles & Huberman, 2014; Flick, 2009). Morse (1995) suggested that at least six interviews are required for phenomenological research, whereas others considered the number much higher (e.g. – Bertaux, 1981) or much more variable, such as the five to twenty-five suggested by Creswell (2009) to provide enough codes for thorough data analysis. Therefore, whilst data collection began with the expectation that approximately 12 to 16 interviews would be necessary, it was with the caveat that this stage would also cease ‘upon saturation’. As detailed in section 5.2.6, 15 participants were interviewed (excluding the additional five in the subsequent focus group), some of whom were re-interviewed later to re-examine or expand upon themes.

A snowball, purposive sampling strategy was used to recruit suitable participants (Creswell, 2009; Flick, 2009), with a focus on depth of data and building narratives, and to generate transferability, hence an element of generalizability (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Whilst chain-referral sampling – which includes snowball sampling – was originally formulated to scrutinise social network structure (Coleman, 1959; Goodman, 1961) or homophily (Heckathorn, 2011), these were not part of this study. Rather, snowball sampling was adopted as a ‘judgment sampling’ method, between the two extremes of convenience and theoretical sampling (Marshall, 1996), enabling entry to an accessible population not necessarily ‘hard-to-reach’ in terms of access (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981), but in identification – target respondent groups are likely not to be impenetrable, but hidden, obscuring the sample frame from which participants would be drawn (Heckathorn, 2011). Although selection of prospective participants was not hampered by geographical dispersion or stigma (Sudman & Kalton, 1986), the number of participants is small relative to the overall population. As 12 to 16 interviews were anticipated as the optimum required number, two initial ‘seed’ participants were selected and subsequently invited to ‘recruit’

(Neuman, 2013) a second wave of two participants each. In turn, these second wave participants would nominate two third wave participants. (This was applied flexibly where the 'seeds' were able to nominate more or fewer, and where new participants became known directly to the researcher.) Monitoring for saturation occurred throughout the interview process (Morse, 1995; Byrne, 2001; Creswell, 2009; Flick, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 2014).

The selection criteria used were as follows:

- (i) direct experience of the phenomenon (IM), and "to address specific purposes related to research questions" (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p.84);
- (ii) willingness to discuss the phenomenon;
- (iii) high likelihood of providing 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) and ably addressing the research questions (Teddlie & Yu, 2007);
- (iv) accessibility and availability;
- (v) willingness to be reflexive;
- (vi) potential to benefit from the research, enjoying interviews or finding them emancipatory;
- (vii) "the researcher selects cases she or he can learn the most from" (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p.84);

Despite Erickson's (1979) assertion that the bias inherent in choosing 'seed' participants, even through "expert judgement" (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p.84), is compounded by snowball sampling, homophily or 'in-breeding bias' (Rapaport, 1979), Heckathorn (1997) analysed the peer recruitment process, finding that "contrary to the conventional wisdom, bias from

the convenience sample of initial subjects was progressively attenuated as the sample expanded wave by wave” (Heckathorn, 2011, p 358), with the volume of participant waves, rather than the randomness of the initial sample, key to bias elimination (Heckathorn, 2011).

6.6) Interview conduct, structure & timings

Interviews took place on neutral premises, as interviewing at participants’ workplaces may inhibit them, especially as interviews examined experiences of a workplace phenomenon. Also, as the research topic was neither industry-specific nor dependent upon participants identifying characteristics of their organisations, interviewing on neutral premises negated the requirement for organisational consent, with its associated risks of refusal, withdrawal or censorship. All parties were comfortable, relaxed and prepared, and the venues were appropriate.

Body language was monitored for meaning not conveyed verbally (Mitchell & Jolley 2013); evidence of self-censoring was sought (e.g. – the researcher sought to relax the atmosphere upon noticing a participant biting their bottom lip or gripping their wrist) (Du, Tao & Martinez, 2014); and the researcher role combined leading and listening.

Additionally, the following key interview mistakes identified by Mitchell & Jolley (2013) were addressed by writing guide questions and practising questioning technique amongst peers: leading questions; questions inadvertently eliciting social desirability bias (i.e. – a tendency for participants to give answers which they believe more acceptable to others); double-barrelled questions; excessively long questions; negations; irrelevant questions; poorly worded response questions; long words or jargon; ambiguous words and phrases.

Whilst semi-structured interview questions often follow a 'funnel' formation, with opening questions broad and contextual to relax the participant and set the scene, and subsequent questions increasingly focused on the research topic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cohen & Manion, 1985; King & Horrocks, 2010), it was found useful to employ an 'hourglass' approach in which the final questions became once more generic (McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis, 2011), allowing participants scope for comments on unanticipated topics, to recontextualise their experiences of IM, or to raise any concerns.

6.7) The pilot interview

A pilot interview refined and framed interview questions (King & Horrocks, 2010); checked the appropriateness of a priori themes shaping the questions; helped hone interview technique; anticipated problems which may have arisen later, and mitigated them quickly, rather than allowing them to seep into the time-bound and compressed schedule of the main data collection process; identified potential gaps in the data collection process, or wasteful duplications; analysed risks (which were inherently few); addressed shortcomings appertaining to ethics and research validity (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000; Bloor, 2001); collected contextual information and adapted the research approach (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000); considered the suitability of the intended sampling strategy; and gauged the feasibility of the research objectives.

Arguments exist against pilot interviews, as they can encourage researchers to 'go native', losing objectivity and innocence, and may sometimes make further access more difficult (Sampson, 2004). However, because this research needed to probe participants to uncover often unconscious emotions, it was important not to accept responses 'at face value' (Sampson, 2004), and analysing the pilot helped the researcher become more

discerning. By asking the pilot participant to reflect upon the process afterwards and provide feedback, comparing their views with themes emerging from the Template Analysis, omissions and errors were addressed in subsequent interviews, and over-intrusiveness was prevented. The pilot interview data were sufficiently relevant that they were not discarded as a discrete data set, but treated as part of the full data collection process.

6.7.1) Transcription of the pilot interview

The interviews were transcribed by the researcher through a desire for immersion in the data (Fetterman, 2009). The pilot interview (approximately 75 minutes long) took around eight hours to transcribe – 6½ minutes' typing per minute of speech – and the researcher began unconsciously analysing the data during the transcription process. Kvale (1996) described transcripts as “interpretative constructions...decontextualised conversations [and] abstractions” (pp. 165) and, whilst certain non-verbal utterances, sighs, groans and ‘ums’ were considered significant and therefore included (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), seemingly meaningless affectations, traits and ‘fillers’ were not (Fink, 2000). Transcripts were typed with wide spaces and margins to allow annotation and interpretive scribbling, with participants' identities obscured using codes kept in a codebook separate from the transcripts (King & Horrocks, 2010).

6.7.2) Template Analysis of the pilot interview

6.7.2.1) Rationale for use of Template Analysis of the Pilot Interview

Template Analysis of the pilot interview was undertaken to identify key themes for exploration throughout subsequent interviews. It was not used for subsequent interviews, as its rather pseudo-positivistic nature was less appropriate than VCRM in exploring

individuals' lived experiences (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). Nevertheless, by avoiding the extremes of Miles, Huberman & Saldaña's (2014) 'top-down' analysis and the 'bottom-up' approach of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), the ideological neutrality of Template Analysis suited it to exploring themes from the initial data (King & Horrocks, 2010). Its flexibility for coding comparative to IPA and Braun & Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis – which impose shallow coding hierarchies, preventing exploration of a priori themes – allowed data to be interrogated sufficiently deeply to compare findings with extant literature themes. In undertaking the analysis, the guidance of Crabtree & Miller (1992) and King (2004) was followed whilst not using Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) programmes like Nvivo, as "immersion in the data is an essential part of the interpretive process and use of technology can often act as a substantial barrier" (Waring & Wainwright, 2008, p. 92).

6.7.2.2) Constructing the template

To construct the template, hierarchically arranged codes were produced in diagrammatic form, with codes nested by broad themes. The themes considered most relevant were usually allocated the highest number of hierarchical levels. Allocating codes was open-ended and iterative, so sections of text could be transferred between codes, or placed in multiple codes at different hierarchical levels, upon re-evaluation. Bottom-up themes emerging (often unexpectedly) from the data were coded alongside top-down a priori themes introduced from extant literature or to fulfil the research aims. Template Analysis is unusual in giving equal status to both categories of themes (King, 2004). A trial template was developed from a subset of the data, then used to capture themes from the remainder of the transcript, with new codes added where existing ones were inadequate or inappropriate. Initial codes which became redundant through subsequent recoding were removed or 'relegated' down the hierarchy as lower level codes.

6.7.2.3) Coding issues

Codes were allocated to thematic ideas transcending the text, and accommodated overlapping of themes. Passages within the text could each refer to top-level themes and sometimes other sub-themes. This 'nested' approach may be messy (King, 2004), therefore a brief code book was written – using wide margins and double spaces to accommodate comments and revisions – where written definitions of themes were recorded. This forced the researcher to consider themes thoroughly, rather than allowing them to be obscured by presuppositions. Descriptive coding was undertaken first, clarifying without interpretation what was present in the text. Then interpretive coding applied rationale to certain nested codes, explaining deeper meanings, although it proved difficult to do without drawing premature conclusions which pollute the template. Descriptive and interpretive codes were intermingled and afforded equal status on the template.

6.7.2.4) Revising the template and analysing themes

After several iterations of analysis, the amount of data failing to fit neatly into the template decreased significantly and further iterations made little impact. This, coupled with the fact that enough meaning had been captured, suggested that sufficient analysis had been undertaken (King & Horrocks, 2010). Several new codes were added within the template to group themes more representatively, and redundant codes (subsumed within other codes) were removed, but no new content was added at this point, and only hierarchical or interpretive changes were made. Working by hand, Post-It Notes displaying the names of themes, quotations or references to instances within the transcript were reorganised.

During the interpretation stage, King (2004) advises against including each theme arbitrarily, as most templates comprise over fifty themes, but to choose the most

enlightening ones and analyse them in the research context. Certain themes, which seemed directly relevant, were analysed deeply, relating them to the research question and the data, but care was needed to avoid selecting and discarding themes because of preconceptions. Therefore, justification of themes was considered in the analysis. Themes appeared in a non-linear manner – not as lists, sub-lists and grids, nor in monolithic, silo arrangements – and a Mind Map (Buzan, 2010) was created to make sense of thematic interconnectivity. To decide upon the order in which themes in the literature are discussed, King (2004) advises superimposing a more interpretive, selective meta-template over the main template, highlighting core themes and avoiding linearity and discrete themes by being comparative. However, due to the small amount of data involved, this was not necessary here. Likewise, as it was a smaller part of a wider research process, it was not necessary to write up all results with illustrative cases. However, it was useful to re-examine the transcript theme-by-theme, helping to collate the main ideas.

6.7.2.5) Themes explored from the extant literature during the pilot interview, and themes identified through Template Analysis of the pilot interview

Although most pilot interview questions occurred as a reaction to emerging interview themes or to probe the participant to expand upon a comment, several key questions were introduced due to themes appearing in the extant literature, and focused on the research objectives. The following table identifies four key themes explored in this way:

Theme	Occurrence in Extant Literature
IM programmes should comprise (i) Formal Information Generation; (ii) Informal Information Generation; (iii) Information Dissemination; (iv) Responsiveness.	Lings, I. & Greenley, G. (2009). The impact of internal and external marketing orientations on form performance. <i>Journal of Strategic Marketing</i> , 17 (1), 41-53.
IM programmes most easily and successfully supported by employees are “IM of external campaigns”.	Ind, N. (2007). <i>Living the brand</i> (3 rd ed.), London: Kogan Page (pp. 123)
Internal Branding goes beyond IM by “ensuring that the brand promise is transformed by employees into reality, reflecting...customers’ expectations”.	Punjaisri, K. & Wilson, A. (2011). Internal branding process: key mechanisms, outcomes and moderating factors, <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> , 45 (9/10), 1521-1537.
“When employees understand and are committed to the brand values [they] live up to the customers’ brand expectations”.	ibid

Table 4: Four key themes from extant literature explored in the pilot interview.

The following table identifies four key themes emerging from the pilot interview, rather than being anticipated from the extant literature:

Theme	Occurrence in data
Employee sympathy for transmitter of unpopular IM messages.	“So it creates a lot of sympathy... it’s a balancing act for our managers... our organisation at the moment because, one, they want to market these reforms...”
Employee perception of IM message as part of ‘rank-and-yank’ process.	“So we don’t want to make our weaknesses too bad, and they use it as an excuse to get rid of us, so we try and present the positive things about our site – that it’s a cheap place to rent.”
Employee feeling that IM messages are ‘intended for the chosen’.	“...everybody else has got left behind. There’s been no sort of...there’s no incentives for anyone else.”
IM encouraging employees to ‘close ranks’ against the organisation.	“we’ve got more protective, so it can become a little bit ‘them against us’ sort of thing...this kind of negativity actually binds people together really.”

Table 5: Four themes emerging unexpectedly from the pilot interview.

Uncovering these emerging themes required renewed examination of the focal literature, but also a broadening of the focus, exploring these new contexts and ascertaining their significance.

6.8) Voice-Centred Relational Method

Mauthner & Doucet (1998) proposed Voice-Centred Relational Method (VCRM) to address a perceived shortage of qualitative data analysis strategies. Based upon Brown and Gilligan's (1992) work in constructing meaning from transcripts, it retained their desire to privilege the voice (Mazzei & Jackson, 2009) within the text, rather than losing participants' individualities through the categorisation inherent in techniques using coding to slice transcripts thematically, such as Template Analysis and IPA (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

At the core of VCRM is the feminist pursuance of researcher reflexivity (Nicholson, 1990), the explicit acknowledgement of researcher-participant positionality (Griffiths, 1995) and/or blurred researcher-participant boundaries (Troyna and Carrington, 1989). This assists understanding of the participant and researcher (Greenbank, 2003), making clear that the researcher is seeking for their participant(s) emancipation (Barnes, 2003), or at least catharsis (Pillow, 2003).

To undertake VCRM, transcripts were read four times to identify (i) the 'plot'; (ii) the 'voice'; (iii) relationships; (iv) contexts (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998), therefore utilising a "discrimination of meaning units" (Ekstedt & Fagerberg, 2005, pp. 61).

6.8.1) Four Readings: Plot, Voice, Relationships and Context

Interview transcripts were first read to analyse the plot. The way participants address interview questions interlinks discrete and separate opinions, recollections and emotions to achieve cohesion and meaning (Cunliffe, 2008; Corlett, 2012). This involves the participant constructing a plot comprising actors and actions, objects and subjects, events, language, time and imagery, which the researcher analyses (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). Additionally, the researcher strives to recognise and declare their unique position – influenced by experiences and beliefs – in the narrative, as part of interviewer self-reflexivity (Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day, 2012). The second reading of interview transcripts sought to establish the voice of ‘I’. When participants use personal pronouns, they display perceived positions relative to others, their experiences and self-concepts (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Ahrens & Khalifa, 2013), as they represent themselves verbally and build narratives. During their third reading, transcripts were analysed for evidence of the relationships between participants and other individuals, groups, networks and society (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). These included colleagues, their organisations, friends and family members. Texts were scoured for mentions of people and interpersonal entities. The fourth reading of the transcripts analysed the wider contexts within which participants exist, such as belief systems and religions, societal mores, laws, expectations, social units and cultures – all of which may restrict and inhibit and/or enable and liberate (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998).

6.9) Use of a focus group

After analysing interviews, it was advantageous to undertake a focus group interview as a supplementary data source. This also helped interpret interview findings, providing methodological triangulation and facilitating further investigation of key themes emerging from the earlier analysis (Litosseliti, 2003). Whilst interviews elicited multi-stakeholder perspectives, a focus group allowed interplay of voices and juxtaposition of contrasting

views (Litosseliti, 2003), interrogating further the complexities of stakeholders' experiences of IM, and helping to answer less open-ended questions.

Despite focus groups requiring skilled moderation and analysis, careful composition of the group and vigilance against over-generalisation (Creswell, 2014) – all manageable challenges – this supplementary data collection method was selected for its flexibility, the speed with which contrasting opinions could be explored, and its potential for following up previous participant responses. Moreover, the opportunity to use a method which democratises the research process, addresses researcher-participant power imbalances and encourages interactivity, fitted with the underlying philosophical presuppositions and stance of the research.

Five participants were recruited who had not taken part in the initial interviews. Two of these were recruited directly as seed participants who subsequently recruited another three participants based on screening information provided. Whilst Krueger (1994) states that six to ten is the most common number of focus group participants, Krueger & Casey (2008) maintain that between three and twelve is feasible. All five participants had previous experience of IM in several contexts, worked within a mile of each other (which helped to schedule the meeting) and, as each participant knew one of the others, they were comfortable with each other, giving a mutually supportive research environment (Morgan, 1998). As a suite of interviews had already taken place with a diverse range of participants, providing representativeness within the sample (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999), a more homogenous focus group composition was chosen to reduce the likelihood of inhibition. Ice breakers were used to relax participants (Gray, 2004), and the importance of reflexivity explained (Greenbaum, 2000). The moderator's role was defined before the discussion (Edmunds, 1999), which occurred at a neutral location, and a briefing was given which covered confidentiality, an introduction to the topic, and an outline of

expectations (Foddy, 1993). The conversations were recorded and later transcribed by the researcher, although analysis was ongoing from the point of discussion itself (Myers & Macnaghten, 1999). Although some initial opening questions were prepared, participants were allowed some control over the direction of the discussion. However, the moderator ensured that any gaps from the interviews were addressed and, using stepped questioning, that interesting comments were expanded upon. Subsequent analysis of the data was by VCRM (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) which also heeded Krueger's (1998) advice on focus group analysis by paying attention to the internal consistency of the participants' comments, the frequency, intensity, specificity and extensiveness of those comments, and to what was left unsaid.

6.10) Research ethics

Ethical research should achieve beneficence ('the doing of good') and non-maleficence ('the avoidance of doing harm'). In exploring experiences of participants underrepresented in the extant literature, the research fulfilled these criteria. High ethical standards are paramount to protect participants and researchers, producing 'clean' research, guarding the reputation of the university and profession, and avoiding 'fouling the nest' for future researchers or bringing 'turbulence to the field' (Punch, in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), 1998, p157). By devolving some autonomy to participants, especially in deciding how self-revelatory interviews would be, the strategy heeded Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden's (2000) advice in avoiding paternalism. However, where participants risked divulging confidential information or appeared stressed by discussing sensitive or personal issues, questioning was guided elsewhere.

Full approval was obtained from Northumbria University Ethics Committee before research commencement, and NBS research policy adhered to throughout. As no minors

or vulnerable adults were interviewed, no highly sensitive issues investigated, and neither capacity nor competence were problematic, the risk of harm to the researcher, referencing the 'Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers' (The Social Research Association, 2013), was extremely low.

Research Organisation Informed Consent Forms were not required, as research was never organisation-specific (or industry-specific) nor occurred during company hours or on company premises. Individual Informed Consent Forms, stating the study's purpose, the researcher's identity and details of who would access the transcripts, were authorised to ensure their willingness to be involved. All consent forms were signed by the researcher, countersigned by participants, shown to the doctoral supervisors prior to the primary data collection and filed in a locked cabinet.

Within consent forms, participants were informed of the following before each stage of data collection: the subject being researched; reasons for the research; how the research is funded; how results will be analysed and disseminated; the participants' role in the process; participant risks or benefits; and anonymising of data (e.g. – through coding, and removal of identifying context). A Research Ethical Issues Form was completed, signed and dated by the researcher and approved at supervisor level prior to research. It indicated the research title and start date; a description of the methodology and participant involvement; any specific ethical issues which could arise (e.g. – consent, data anonymity, storage and disposal, and representation of findings); methods used to mitigate these issues; and confirmation of consent. Each prospective participant was provided a Participant Information Sheet, stating the reason for, and scope of, the research, why the participant specifically was approached, how long the research was likely to take and in what form. It outlined procedures for ensuring anonymity, data protection and disposal,

and for allowing withdrawal. Thus the decision to participate was informed and entirely voluntary.

No financial incentive, reward or formal recognition was offered for participation, as this could harvest uncommitted, unreliable responses. No participant requested public recognition for their contribution, and this would have been declined as it could have implicated others' identities through context, or necessitated the expurgating of findings. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw themselves and their data from the research process at any time, although, through qualifying the suitability of participants and checking for extenuating issues before commencement, such time-consuming hindrances were avoided. As advised by Wiles, Heath, Crow and Charles (2007), an attempt would have been made to limit withdrawal to one specific question or stage of the research (this being stated in advance), ring-fencing the potential impact.

Data have been retained for future use (e.g. – for writing journal articles within a limited timeframe). Permission was sought from university and participant, with a thorough description of the intended future use and justification (in terms of impact, contribution to knowledge and richness of the data). Participants' anonymity has been preserved, identities coded on transcripts and in the thesis, codes secured in a locked cabinet in a locked room, and encryption software used to protect files containing sensitive data. It will be destroyed one year after thesis submission where longer retention has not been agreed with participant and university.

6.11) Research limitations and suggestions for future research

The major constraint on this research was the limited time available to collect and analyse the data, influencing the choice of a cross-sectional study and VCRM analysis of the main interviews. Whilst these were entirely suitable, a more longitudinal, ethnographic study would perhaps produce more varied results, bringing new strands of knowledge and an increased generalisability. Additionally, a longer timescale would allow Template Analysis of all interview transcripts, potentially complementing the VCRM analysis. Longitudinal research would also allow more detailed study of how participants adapt and evolve due to protracted changes in their organisations' IM.

Although a purposive sampling strategy is appropriate for researching employees, with screening questions incorporated into interviews to check participants' levels of experience of the phenomenon being researched, a larger sample size, perhaps drawing participants from broader socio-cultural backgrounds, could complement emergent insights.

This study could be complemented by quantitative research exploring correlation and causality between variables, such as 'employee commitment to organisation', 'credibility of IM messages', 'trust between employee and organisation' and 'level of coercion used in management of employees'. (Part of the challenge would be defining and quantifying these abstract phenomena.) Relationships between similar variables have been explored in the context of inter-organisational, dyadic supply chain relationships through classic positivist inquiry (e.g. – Rosenberg & Stern, 1970; Lusch, 1976; Kale, 1989; Mayo, Richardson & Simpson, 1998), but much less in an IM context.

6.12) Summary of Chapter 6

This chapter has dealt with the methodological choices, justifying them within the context of the research objectives, explaining their consistency with the ontological and epistemological commitments underpinning the research, exploring their contribution to the research reliability and credibility and – in the case of participant-led pre-interview autonethnographic member checking – their contribution to qualitative inquiry methodology.

The following chapter outlines major research findings and analyses them within the context of the extant literature and research objectives.

Chapter 7: Findings and analysis of the interviews: Internal Marketing

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As discussed in the Methodology chapter, this research contributes to theory: by exploring perspectives of IM which are not predominantly organisational, but individual; by representing the voices of stakeholders from numerous industries and hierarchical positions, of both genders and with diverse experiences of IM; and by democratising the research and enfranchising research participants. This has revealed new, deep insights from fresh perspectives, explored thematically in this section.

The major data collection strategy was semi-structured interviews in which participants could steer discussions in relevant and fruitful directions, rather than towards predetermined questions. Likewise, the data analysis strategy, both through Template Analysis (King & Horrocks, 2010) and VCRM (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998), lets new insights emerge freely. However, an underlying structure helped organise data collection and analysis processes. As reviewing the literature found thirteen broadly identifiable aspects of IM theory, these formed a loose framework in which interview findings could be arranged and presented, as follows:

7.1 - Participants' general experiences and understanding of Internal Marketing;

7.2 – IM's ability to transfer the marketing approaches to an organisation's relationship with its employees (e.g. – Christopher et al, 2013);

7.3 – the improvements achievable in terms of staff performance (e.g. – Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Ballantyne, 1997; Ballantyne, 2000; Sanchez-Hernandez & Miranda, 2011; Christopher et al, 2013);

7.4 – its facilitation of relational networks and interactivity (e.g. – Varey, 1995; Voima, 2001; Lings, 2004);

7.5 – its role in staff recruitment, satisfaction and retention (e.g. – Berry, 1984; Glassman & McAfee, 1992; Quester & Kelly, 1999; Gounaris, 2006);

7.6 – its ability to orient staff towards customers (e.g. – Grönroos, 1981; George, 1990; Ballantyne, 1997; Awwad & Agti, 2011; Day, 2012; Christopher et al, 2013);

7.7 – its function to facilitate or contribute to HRM strategy (e.g. – Collins & Payne, 1991; Hales, 1994);

7.8 – its treatment of colleagues as internal customers and/or the consideration of jobs as internal products (e.g. – Berry, 1984; Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Green et al, 1994; Ballantyne, 1997; Caruana & Calleya, 1998; Lings, 2004);

7.9 – its motivation of staff towards achievement of organisational goals (e.g. – Grönroos, 1981; Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; Conduit & Mavondo, 2001);

7.10 – its encouragement of internal market research and exchange, and its facilitation of organisational knowledge transmission and growth of organisational competencies (e.g. – Ballantyne, 1997; Ballantyne, 2000; Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Gounaris, 2006; Lindner & Wald, 2011);

7.11 – its instigation of effective internal communications (e.g. – Varey, 1995; Hogg et al, 1998; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000; Kale, 2012);

7.12 – its agency for organisational change (e.g. – Reardon & Enis, 1990; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; Varey, 1995; Varey & Lewis, 1999; Winston & Cahill, 2012; Christopher et al, 2013);

7.13 – its streamlining of internal processes, acting as integrative mechanism to discourage silo mentality (e.g. – Reardon & Enis, 1990; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; Varey, 1995; Ballantyne, 1997; Varey & Lewis, 1999; Ballantyne, 2000; Kelemen, 2000; Hume & Hume, 2014); and

7.14 – its contribution to management of organisational culture (e.g. – Gummesson, 1987; George, 1990); Piercy & Morgan, 1991; Kelemen & Papasolomou-Doukakis, 2004).

7.1) Participants' general experiences and understanding of Internal Marketing

When recruiting and interviewing participants, a decision had to be made about how much information on IM would be presented to them, possibly colouring their answers. Initially, participants were screened by asking them several questions, including “Do you know what Internal Marketing is?” (except for certain participants such as Roger, who was already known to the researcher and had discussed the subject informally in the past). Arthur proved problematic in this respect. Having recently gained an MSc in Marketing, he provided an almost textbook definition of IM which included

“adding value to multiple stakeholders”,

even though the title of this thesis was unknown to him, but his interview responses were often self-conscious and seemed to pander to theory or attempt self-analysis within a theoretical framework. However, these problems were almost non-existent amongst Jessie, Hamish, Lizzie, Gary and Winifred, all of whom had business qualifications at degree level or above. Their definitions of IM were accurate but very much their own – imprecise and focused on their personal understandings of the ethos, values and philosophy of IM. Lizzie talked passionately about

“getting everyone together, talking everyone in the same direction and giving everyone a say”,

and Jessie described it as a way of

“making sure everyone understands what [the organisation] needs to do, what their role in it is, and what sort of working practices need to be adopted”.

Perhaps tellingly, both gesticulated, paused, stumbled for words, giggled nervously and asked the researcher if they were on the right lines'. Their explanations were conceptual,

acknowledging that different managers and organisations could apply their own legitimate interpretations of IM. Hamish and Winifred, both MBA qualified, and Gary, holder of a Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing, also had a conceptual understanding of IM without rigid ideas regarding its execution. None had studied IM but declared themselves aware of the central tenets, though again sought confirmation from the researcher. Winifred was most evangelical, describing it as

“a set of actions or ideas or principles which an organisation can put into practice, not just to make the organisation get more from its staff, but to make working there a better experience – more enjoyable for staff, more fulfilling”.

Hamish also declared himself a believer in IM's potential, but had been worn down by external factors, and particularly political pressures, saying

“it should be a force for good. It should help people to get more out of their jobs, being more open and inclusive with them. It could streamline a lot of processes and help [us] to serve our [customers] better. Yeah, we use it a lot and it guides a lot of what we do. But we're constantly having to live from one day to another and fight fires whenever the government decides we need to jump in another direction.”

Of the participants without a management qualification, Owen was the most conversant with IM, although he sought to check his understanding several times before the interview commenced, and frequently paused and asked if he was still 'on track'. (The researcher's response was inevitably that there was no track – rather a field to be expanded by new insights coming from participants.) His organisation is one which serves marginalised members of society and, as a socialist, he felt the work extremely worthwhile and embraced the idea of IM. He described it as

“the spreading of ideas and values through different types of job function and staff, so that everyone knows how what they do fits into the broader scheme of things. It gives them the big picture and lets them know about the ethos of the organisation and what they can do to help it become better”.

He qualified and expanded upon this at length during the interview.

The remaining participants were unsure of what IM entails (and indeed, Janet, Tom and Desmond had relatively little understanding before the main principles were explained) or, perhaps due to a lack of management qualifications, understood IM at a less conceptual level and more in terms of tactics and actions. Bev described

“conversations, charm offensives, emails encouraging staff to act in a certain manner”,

and Eddie mentioned

“conversations at the water cooler...managers checking up to see how many people have read the latest emailed notice and acted upon it”.

It is therefore assertable that those participants without management qualifications were unimpeded in reliving their personal experiences by preconceptions from academic literature or course content, and they also provided insights into the phenomenon of IM as lived experience more frequently than other participants, who focused on its value to the organisation and its other stakeholders. In short, those participants without management qualifications provided more first-person insights, although qualified respondents also spoke of their experiences (e.g. – Hamish’s frustrations at government intervention, Winifred’s satisfaction at improving staff happiness, etc). Owen and Roger provided the greatest balance between their own perspectives, those of their organisations, and other stakeholders.

It is also important to note that this research, in accordance with university regulations, made use of Participant Informed Consent forms which described briefly the subject area, and that most participants also asked for guidance on what did and did not entail IM before embarking upon the interviews and/or their reading of their electronic communications on IM. By giving a brief and open-ended explanation, the researcher is

still likely to have introduced a low level of colouring to the participants' understanding of IM.

7.2) Internal Marketing's ability to transfer the advantages of marketing approaches to an organisation's relationship with its employees

Most discussion of IM transferring external marketing approaches into the internal market (Christopher et al, 2013) came from two participants working for charities, Lizzie and Owen, although Eddie the regional manager also appraised similarities, describing IM's capacity for managing bad news, and its often stylistic nature:

"[we] were very, very careful trying to manage difficult news. Whereas internal customers, different departments, different divisions of the company – we could say, "Look, we know we are gonna have a problem for two months here". But you could get some bad news out there, as it were, but make sure that you follow that up with, "But the solution is here" "

Choosing to speak about the relationships inherent in IM, Eddie believes that, although internal customers are receptive to marketing approaches, the language could be more pragmatic than when it communicates to the external audience, perhaps because employees are less likely to break the relationship, or because their knowledge of the organisation demands more transparent, nuanced messages. However, certain differences arise from lack of integration within the marketing function, as he moves on to a discussion of key actors in 'the plot' of his IM story:

"The liaison with head office...I think we got the company to look hard at external communications, and they realised there was a big difference in that... we actually had two teams".

The two teams do not necessarily work in isolation, but the difference in tone, content and style may be partially caused by different personnel managing marketing externally and internally, possibly compromising consistency and cost-efficiency – this could undermine

the credibility of IM by orienting internal stakeholders to differently nuanced values to those expressed externally (Kelemen & Papasolomou-Doukakis, 2004).

When reflecting on the extent to which his organisation's values and marketing approach were inside-out (Van Rekom et al, 2006; Crain, 2009; King & Grace, 2010) or outside-in (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Miles & Mangold, 2004, Burmann et al, 2009), Owen commented that

“it's more outside-in, but if members of staff thought that a certain audience or a certain training course for example didn't sit with the charity's objectives, and members of staff have raised this comment as well...they'd sit up and listen to that.”

Only around a half of participants considered the application of external marketing approaches to the internal market significant to their IM experiences, although most acknowledged it, implying that, although there must be some commonality of approach to deliver consistency and credibility, the differing characteristics and needs of the two markets may necessitate some differentiation of approach and perhaps segmentation of the internal market and the instilling of different values in different internal stakeholder groups.

7.3) Internal Marketing's improvements of staff performance

Within interviews, participants rarely mentioned IM's improvement of staff performance (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Ballantyne, 1997; Ballantyne, 2000; Sanchez-Hernandez & Miranda, 2011), although the implicit acknowledgement of its influence by encouraging other changes, such as broadened relational networks or increased satisfaction (Voima, 2001; Lings, 2004), surfaced frequently. Roger, the government employee, and Arthur, the fast-food restaurant team leader, both identified how their organisations had intended to make gains in this area but suffered counterproductive results, whilst Winifred, the charity

CEO, explained her ambitions for staff performance increases. Arthur describes the actions and relationships within the plot of his IM story, and reveals a mechanised process:

“it’s again like Customer Services. Like, we get half the customers to fill in feedback forms...how they like the job and how they like this other stuff, treating them or...we’ve measured the Customer Service feedback, how they have been perceived, before the training sessions...”

In this case, feedback forms gauge satisfaction levels of external customers and employees. This may not indicate the application of an external marketing organisational mind-set or philosophy to the internal market, perhaps showing staff satisfaction as an afterthought not meriting separate procedures. Moreover, here staff feedback appears utilised as a comparative data set to the customer feedback, perhaps triangulating their findings in the external market and diagnosing causal factors within the internal market. Indeed, Arthur elsewhere explains how the organisation attempts to gauge IM campaign efficacy by using staff performance KPIs, suggesting IM is not a permanent underpinning to the employee experience. He finds his ‘voice’ (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) to build a narrative, recalling that

“a few staff took it in a positive note. Some took it really in a demotivating way. For example, when they say, “Some staff have done really well, so we expect the same from you”, some staff took it in a positive way, and they took it as motivating...but some staff took it in a negative, like say, “Oh, ok, I worked hard as well, so why haven’t they recognised my work? So why does he get it? Why not me?””

As Roger discusses during the Chapter 8 case study, singling out workers for praise, or making them a positive example to others, risks alienating those not chosen. Employees may perceive that, by omission or comparative lack of praise, they are undervalued. This may constitute unintentional demarketing (Kotler & Levy, 1971; Bradley & Blythe, 2014) – the unplanned ID proposed in Chapter 8. In Roger’s organisation, ranking employees in the lowest quartile should be accompanied by evidence of developmental training,

“otherwise people will just deem it as “ah, I’m just much worse than everybody else” ”,

which would be demotivational.

The strongest evidence of IM increasing staff performance motivationally came from Winifred, the charity CEO who had implemented a buddying and job shadowing scheme. She envisaged it helping new starters develop organisational belonging and self-confidence, improving their performance. Using her ‘voice’ and building ‘context’ by describing the cultural values within her interpretation of IM, she explains,

“I remember being a new starter myself in various junior positions throughout my career, and in all of them I have felt unsure at times, and this has resulted in a lack of self-confidence...in, I suppose, a questioning of the values of the employer and...well, from a business point of view, in an unnecessary loss of productivity – not performing my job in a surefooted manner for fear of doing the wrong thing.”

Central to this is Winifred’s willingness to empathise by reflecting on her own experiences, and perhaps her willingness to pursue IM without rushing to gauge its commercial benefits:

“there were several key managers working with the HR Director and we can’t expect all of them to have had the same interpretation – some would have seen it in quite a process-driven way, whereas others may have considered staff satisfaction an end in itself. And we can’t say that either view is wrong.”

Perhaps by considering staff satisfaction and the job product as the end goal of IM, rather than the means to a commercial end, Winifred’s IM strategy benefits from its authenticity and delivers commercial improvements.

7.4) Internal Marketing’s facilitation of relational networks and interactivity

Over half of participants discussed IM’s promotion of staff interaction (Varey, 1995; Voima, 2001; Lings, 2004), or staff interaction’s facilitation of IM – the two often

considered mutually supporting. Eddie, a former manager within a global company, discussed the belief systems and social mores giving context to his experiences of organisational change:

“you wouldn’t necessarily communicate the change to the whole company...you would nurture the grapevine. All large companies have grapevines, and people think that they are people confiding in each other and all that, but in fact a good company will have a grapevine and the personnel department will feed it.”

Although using Word of Mouth is commonplace within external marketing and often increases credibility (Lovett, Peres & Shacher, 2013), Eddie uses euphemisms when describing its practice in IM, perhaps suggesting he considers it ethically ambiguous.

When discussing relationships within IM, Hamish, the NHS manager, addresses the lack of interaction between leaders and employees:

“I wouldn’t describe them as figureheads, no...they’re very capable, intelligent, high-performing people, but the corporate mentality way of thinking...you know, when I joined [the organisation], the Chairman...we used to see him all the time. He was walking round all the time, and the Chief Exec, whereas these days a lot of the execs, certainly within [this region] are based in, um, they’re based in business parks.”

Although this debates leadership and perhaps managers’ ability to model behaviours, it acknowledges the importance of visibility and interaction if the organisation is to benefit from a figurehead. Lizzie, Marketing Manager at an employee-owned company, considered how IM created an interconnected workforce:

“Just being able to have that ‘hello’ and ‘how ye doing?’, ‘how’s your week been? And he would do that to the MD without thinking. So somebody who is out on the road and doesn’t often come into the office feels comfortable in the office.”

Just by dismantling hierarchical barriers and humanising relationships, IM has enabled staff to interact in a relaxed manner (Lings, 2004), benefitting someone based ‘on the

road' who potentially misses the comradeship enjoyed by people located together. Lizzie then uses her 'voice' to explain how this relationalism is fostered:

"the newsletter does a lot with that because we use the less professional side of it where people can, say, send pictures of their kids in Halloween fancy dress, or send in a piece about the holiday they've just been on. So then you've got something like, "Oh, you've just been to Turkey. How was it?", and it just gets the conversation going between staff."

Again, Lizzie suggests that if staff understand their colleagues – families, hobbies and life outside work – this will humanise the relationship, facilitating collaboration on work matters.

Owen, a trainer for a charitable organisation, explains how staff interaction helps the organisation and workforce benefit from the experiences of boundary-spanners:

"it should be driven by people who are at the front line who probably have more experience – it's the old adage about teaching. You know, the teachers who have the most interaction with students are the ones who are delivering lessons at secondary schools, the primary schools, the colleges, every hour during their working day, whereas the most senior members of staff in a school, or your head teachers and the like, they never teach any lessons, so it's better delivered – IM or whatever – by those at the coal face who are involved in the day-to-day actions about 'this is what's happening', rather than seeing something that's foisted from above on staff that they have no control over."

Owen, speaking about the hierarchical considerations in the IM relationship, realises the potential of IM to harvest intelligence from the 'coal face' and disseminate it to decision makers (Gounaris, 2006; Lindner & Wald, 2011), democratising decision making, ensuring that policies are commercially appropriate and have credibility with an informed workforce. Gary, senior manager with an insurance company, describes how managers used staff integration and interactivity to gauge the success of his IM implementation:

"if they were at the edges of our communication, if we sort of asked them from time to time what they were understanding about what was happening, it was a really good litmus test to find out, well, "Ah right, well, we're reaching those guys". And of course, they're meeting the general public".

Just as Lizzie's organisation used interaction to include peripheral staff, Gary measured the opinions of geographically distant staff to gauge how effectively IM initiatives had been transmitted, through formal communication and the grapevine which Eddie discussed.

It appears from these comments that staff integration and relationalism benefit the organisation and may be fostered by IM – indeed, participants perceive this as a key IM objective. It also seems to be a reciprocal relationship, in which increased interactivity also enables and encourages better IM.

7.5) Internal Marketing's role in the recruitment, satisfaction and retention of staff

IM can make job products desirable (Ballantyne, 1997; Lings, 2004) and employees feel valued, increasing staff satisfaction and retention (Quester & Kelly, 1999; Gounaris, 2006) and, through improving the organisation's reputation, attract higher calibre job applicants (Berry, 1984). One may also have altruistic reasons for improving satisfaction. As Lizzie observed,

“staff enjoying coming to work and enjoying being part of the organisation and just that feel-good factor is really important.”

The importance attached to IM's ability to retain staff is influenced by the probable difficulty of replacing staff, and the availability of equivalent employment locally – market forces. Bev, a highly qualified biochemist, explains the organisational aims which build the 'plot' and outlines the context of her story. She believes IM in her innovative organisation is

“retention to be honest. I think they're trying to retain staff, cos the trouble with [this location] is, if you're a straight engineer, there's a lot of places you can go.”

It may be worthwhile mapping the prevalence of IM initiatives longitudinally to ascertain how they correspond with job market fluctuations.

Arthur describes inadequacies in his organisation's IM relative to recruitment and retention:

"When they recruit the people, they don't really specify what the job is and what exactly is the company. They just need people, they hire them and they...just put them on the floor."

This employer has seemingly decided that employees are not worth the financial outlay of effective IM. However, this may be false economy as IM could reduce churn rates (Glassman & McAfee, 1992), producing more satisfied staff who better interact with customers, increasing customer loyalty and corporate reputation (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993).

Whilst Arthur's organisation increases staff satisfaction, initiatives seem ad hoc, localised and unstructured, not strategic:

"they say, 'Ok, because you've worked very hard, because you're doing really well, uh, ok, we will have a staff night out.' And other than that, they don't do much."

The small size of Arthur's organisation compared to his previous high street chain possibly influences its lack of IM strategy. However, there appears no reason to assume that IM would be less effective in an SME than a multinational, in terms of satisfaction and retention, and through using his 'voice' to analyse his experiences, it is apparent that poor management of IM can impact upon self-concept.

Staff satisfaction may be difficult to achieve in times of flux or retrenchment, as Eddie explains when setting the context of his organisation's culture:

“We’ve made lots of money and everybody’s happy, and you’re all having a pay rise which you haven’t had for the past three years, and you get an extra week’s holiday” and all the rest of it. That’s never going to be a problem – everybody loves that. “We’re going to have to cut the workforce by fifty percent and we haven’t yet worked out the detail but we will let you know in the fullness of time but don’t worry” isn’t going to go down quite as well.”

Whether this constitutes IM or internal communication is debatable, but Eddie considers it IM – handling unwelcome news to avoid employee demotivation or alienation. Therefore, when researching IM’s effect on staff satisfaction, one should include defensive scenarios where it protects staff morale. It seems likely that different approaches would be used in that context.

Jessie, an academic, felt alienated and angered – demotivated and dissatisfied – through IM messages delivered by senior managers who she felt cannot empathise with staff:

“it would feel more genuine coming from someone who I would consider more of a ground troop. Cos I sometimes see the guys at the top as the guys who aren’t on the front line and who aren’t in the trenches. Who are sat back at home, ringing Blackadder and Baldrick [laughs].”

Although IM may benefit from the modelling by senior managers of desired behaviours (George, 1990), they may not be the best choice of representative when the audience may prefer someone sharing their challenges. Indeed, the dissatisfaction arising from receiving IM messages from a privileged other may be vitriolic, as Jessie explains:

“there was one and he was doing the address, and I just thought, “Screw you! I’m not going to support you getting your 11% pay rise or whatever when we didn’t get that – like that’s not right.” “

Here Jessie finds her ‘voice’ very strongly to vent her emotions surrounding her organisation’s management of IM, and it appears that the interview process is cathartic. Later, in the case study, Roger expands this phenomenon, describing how hearing “we’re all in this together” from a privileged executive creates resentment and disconnect, encouraging staff to reject initiatives which may otherwise be acceptable.

Similarly, employees appear dismissive of IM initiatives in an organisation with a history of failed or aborted IM initiatives - especially public sector organisations whose working practices change with each national government. Hamish explains:

“There was a five year plan and they never reached any of their targets then. So you can imagine how, across the organisation, that’s kind of soul destroying because all that middle management has been told to implement these plans which have never achieved anything.”

One can sympathise with the disappointment of committing to an initiative, only to fail through government interference, and this affects internal stakeholders’ willingness to invest in subsequent initiatives. CM literature suggests a channel intermediary’s willingness to invest in a joint venture is influenced by experiences of previous investments (e.g. - Frazier et al, 1989). There is no reason to assume the phenomenon would differ at an interpersonal level. More research into this may assist practitioners.

Distilling the importance of staff retention to an organisation, Lizzie explained that

“You know, if I use a printer, I build a relationship with the Key Account Manager, they move somewhere else, I move with them because I trust that person. And it’s the same in any service organisation, I think. So staff retention’s obviously very important to the business.”

Lizzie, discussing the relational networks in her organisation, recognises how IM can improve staff satisfaction and, consequently, loyalty and retention, delivering relational and commercial gains for the organisation and stakeholders.

7.6) Internal Marketing’s orientation of staff towards their customers

IM’s role in making staff customer-oriented and sales-focused (Grönroos, 1981; George, 1990; Balantyne, 1997; Awwad & Agti, 2011; Day, 2012) was evident throughout the

interviews, though with differing levels of positivity. Owen, describing his organisation's mores and values to build context, spoke approvingly of his organisation's approach:

"I think that the charity expects the staff to be professional and business-like and to adopt the values which their business supporters and...which they're presenting to the outside world as being the only national charity in the country that campaign on these issues, then that's us – they'd like to create the image that we are slick, professional and at the fore of developing. That's the image that they'd like to present."

Whilst Owen describes a textbook example of IM promoting customer-orientation, other participants, including Arthur, suggest their organisations struggle to adopt best practice:

"there are guidelines on how the staff have to treat the customers [and] other staff. So like 'kind approach', uh, 'smiling', uh, 'all the time like have a positive approach to other customers'. When it comes to the staff, there are no set of guidelines on how to treat other staff – just abstract... things."

Perhaps mindful of the high staff churn rates which Arthur mentions elsewhere, his organisation appears to take a superficial, operational interpretation of IM, either giving employees a tick-list of actions like 'smiling' - prescriptive and likely to produce insincere interaction - or vague, abstract guidelines about respect.

There were also instances when participants believed their organisations' customer-orientation had become excessive, relegating staff to a distant second place. As Jessie, the academic, explained:

"Student satisfaction seems to rule the roost around here, which I don't agree with at all. I just don't know why we pander to them the way we do..."

As earlier, Jessie finds her 'voice' when describing how her organisation's culture clashes with her personal expectations. When staff feel subservient to customers, this fuels resentment of the organisation, which employees may perceive as neglecting their needs, and even of customers, whom they may perceive as comparatively privileged (King & Grace, 2010). Jessie continues:

“So yes, they gave [students] the [staff] common room and I didn’t agree with that at all. That just made me feel quite unwanted actually, which I didn’t really agree with.”

Against a background of pay freezes and increased expectations of academics, reallocating a staff common room to students indicates poor IM awareness by management, and such actions potentially damage labour relations and customer (student) satisfaction – seemingly the opposite of the intended outcome.

Hamish questioned forcing staff to undertake mandatory training, suggesting that hostages fail to embrace the initiative, and that an employee with a defective manner could be beyond help:

*“you go in and do the training, and if you’re a **** and you go onto the training, then you’ll carry on being a ****, won’t you?... Generally when people have to do something, if it is not for professional competency or to maintain things like [top professional] competency, they’re very cynical about it, aren’t they?”*

However, Hamish appears convinced of the need to instil a customer-oriented ethos amongst internal stakeholders. Reflecting on his organisation’s value systems and culture to provide context, he explains that

“one of those aspects is co-production, which is to involve people who use your service in running your service, and I’ve had mixed experiences of that. Um, some good experiences where they probably did make people in the programme more aware of the people who were using the service, because it was a new programme, so we took that approach early on and it was good. And others where involving people at that level is just not helpful at all because they will resist change.”

Hamish implies that this ‘new sort of’ thinking requires refinement by practitioners and researchers.

Eddie accepted the need for IM to communicate the commercial context and make clear the organisational expectations of staff in that context, including at an individual level:

"I think you can say, yes, "This is what we're faced with. This is where we are now. This is where we're going. Here's how we propose to get there."

Owen suggested that IM plays a more important role for employees who are (externally) customer-facing:

"it matters more for employees who are front-line delivery, involved in policy, political lobbying and teaching training courses and meeting members of the public on a daily basis."

This appears plausible commercially, and expected. However, his rationale is not purely commercial, as he explains when considering the relationships and groups within his organisation:

"It has more resonance with them, but other employees are not involved with that type of engagement in their activities and some employees don't particularly share the political, social and ethical charitable objectives of the workplace. They merely view it as a place to work."

In what may be another reason to segment the internal market and target separate IM initiatives at each segment, he proposes that employee motivation towards their organisation's ethos may vary considerably, with certain 'front-line delivery' staff embracing the values as they reflect their own personal worldview, whilst others have a more transactional concept of work and employment.

7.7) Internal Marketing as a conduit for, or a constituent of, Human Resources strategy

Most participants spoke indirectly about IM's role in conducting HR strategy (Collins & Payne, 1991; Hales, 1994), although some discussed operational potential, whilst others explained the role played by HRM in facilitating the spread and relevance of IM, as with Eddie's comments regarding employee feedback:

“a lot of IM isn’t a two-way street – they should be prepared to take feedback and adapt...because that’s the only way you find out if your recipe is working.”

This blurring of the IM-HR boundary, where each is mutually supportive (Collins & Payne, 1991), was discussed by Lizzie, who, as a Marketing Manager, carefully included her HR counterpart:

“Making sure that the HR team – well, the HR Manager – is involved and she knows what’s happening and is comfortable. And one way we overcame that is by using her as a communication channel, which works very well.”

Such a process evidently involved careful relationship building:

“I think it took a lot of negotiating, but we went down the line of anything that was communicated to staff through the internal newsletter et cetera, that would all be done as part of the IM. Anything that was communicated which was more in terms of the legal aspects or HR legislation, that sat with the HR Manager. And it worked quite well, as long as she knew what we were doing and was involved, she was quite happy for us to take the lead.”

Despite not being knowing Rafiq & Ahmed’s (1993) IM-HR delineation, these two managers agreed to define their remits using the idea that HR manages contractual and legalistic matters whilst IM is a battle for employees’ hearts and minds. Lizzie’s success appears testament to the diplomacy and cooperation of the two managers and guards against the domain dissensus which is so conflictual in marketing channels (Ross & Lusch, 1982).

Winifred recalled managing her relationship with HR after she had implemented a major IM initiative which straddled the IM-HR boundary:

“Whilst I took a keen interest and made an effort to keep it as a topical news item, if you like, in staff and board meetings – to keep it in the popular consciousness – I really took a step back and let HR manage it, and this was partly because it was not problematic enough to merit much input from me after implementation, and largely because it inevitably had to be prioritised much lower than a lot of the other pressing things which I had to deal with.”

It is perhaps noteworthy that Winifred passed the initiative to HR, rather than Marketing. When asked if they had the same understanding of the scheme as she had, she explained that

“I think, looking back, that they saw it in a more operational light than I did. I think they saw it more in terms of reducing staff churn and even absenteeism, although I probably didn’t consider this difference of interpretation too much at the time.”

One must remember that, Winifred had particularly altruistic intentions and a long-term view, being prepared to do the right thing with few expectations of quantifiable short-term results, but less tangible gains over a longer timescale.

Hamish commented on the HR implications inherent in implementing public sector initiatives, where the relationships and cultural contexts within partner organisations is also an issue:

“[Unions] can generate a lot of cynicism and, you know, when you go to deliver these presentations, as you’re asked to do, “We’re here to update you all on the change that’s coming your way, folks!” Uh, you know, they’ve all been briefed by their union, and it’s not about an engagement exercise – it’s about a stand-off, like the beginnings of a dispute.”

Hamish suggests unions may be intransigent and oppose changes arbitrarily, hindering IM strategies by slowing implementation and creating an unreceptive audience.

In contrast, another participant in a unionised industry – Jessie, the junior academic – portrayed a more open, accepting landscape:

“I don’t feel like I’m being watched, and I don’t feel like anyone’s trying to force things onto me. I feel like this is more of a suggestion...I think that they could do it in a more powerful way, but I think that, again, because of the emotional intelligence of some of the people around here, if they did that, we would probably know that they’re doing that, and we would probably resist it, I think.”

Jessie here finds her voice in a less vitriolic way than previously, discussing her feelings towards colleagues and her experience of their willingness to embrace IM advances. She suggests that her colleagues' 'emotional intelligence' ensures new ideas are considered fairly.

Whilst some theory (e.g. – Collins & Payne, 1991) analyses IM's capacity as a conduit for HR strategy, findings suggest the relationship between the two functions is reciprocal, and future research into their interdependency may be worthwhile.

7.8) Internal Marketing's encouragement of the treatment of colleagues as internal customers and/or the consideration of jobs as internal products

Whilst several participants described jobs as products and colleagues as internal customers (Greene et al, 1994; Caruana & Calleya, 1998), though not in those exact terms, Winifred explained how this concept informed her introduction of buddying and job shadowing. Central to her logic was a willingness to be altruistic and allow unexpected benefits to flourish, and her beliefs colour her organisation's cultural context:

"it was simply the right thing to do for my employees – the right way to treat them and that they deserved this opportunity. That probably sounds a bit idealistic for a CEO! Of course, I wanted the economic gain too, but I thought that it was doing the right thing and that was important...as corny as this might sound, I think I was more altruistic in my interpretation than HR were. I certainly wanted staff to be happy in their work, regardless of the implications for productivity and so forth."

It is possible that employees embraced the initiative so readily, not just because they could recognise the potential benefits of career progression and job satisfaction (Quester & Kelly, 1999), but also because they perceived the intentions as genuine.

Winifred continued her explanation of how she envisaged internal customers treating each other:

“If someone in Accounting needed someone in Procurement to provide three competitive quotes for a product or to explain why the normal tendering process should be circumvented for whatever reason, then I would expect the Procurement Officer to provide a professional and polite service to the Accounting Officer and to treat them like a customer, and so on.”

She expects flexibility, professionalism, politeness – the same levels of respect and good service expected for an external customer. In return, she believes the organisation should treat employees in an open, trusting and flexible manner:

“We wanted to go that little bit further than we were contractually obliged to so that we didn’t have a regimented relationship between the staff and the organisation. We don’t expect staff to clock-watch, but to stay a bit late if a job needs finishing. Likewise, we would be pretty flexible with letting people change duties with colleagues so that they could get to dental appointments and the like during working hours, and even things like their kids’ school plays.”

By humanising and individualising the organisation-staff relationship, both dyadic partners support each other’s success and wellbeing, accommodating their own needs.

Winifred explained that by offering job products and introducing the job shadowing scheme, she hoped employees would integrate:

“we wanted people sharing ideas and talking to one another. We didn’t want people to be working in a vacuum...Again, part of that is because we wanted to make work a more enjoyable experience for our staff.”

Winifred indicates that by creating job products, they do not just assist employee satisfaction, retention and loyalty (e.g. – Gounaris, 2006), but also the integration of staff and their job roles. By choosing to steer the interview towards an in-depth discussion of networks, friendships and colleagues, she places ‘relationships’ at the core of her understanding of IM.

Labelling and designation appear important in job products. Hamish, noting a recategorisation of certain jobs in his organisation, explains that

“an Administrative Officer is called a Resource Officer in our organisation, whether you work for [one] programme or [a totally different one], and you’re an Admin...you’re a Resource Officer, your job description is exactly the same irrespective of the service.”

In this instance, skilled staff in certain areas are stripped of identities relating to their function and given new designations reflecting their grade but not function-specifically, potentially undermining their self-concepts, although perhaps undertaken with the honourable intention of dismantling silos and integrating staff (Kelemen, 2000; Hume & Hume, 2014).

Bev, outlining some of the actors in the ‘plot’ of her IM experience, explained how job products at her former company were not limited to the roles themselves:

“I think it covered a broad headline of ‘nice place to work’...So basically I would say to my boss, “I’m going swimming now, See you later”. So I would come at seven, and I’d leave at seven, but in the middle of the day I would go swimming or go to the gym or something. And that also didn’t seem to cause a problem to anyone so that’s nice.”

Not only did the organisation provide attractive job products – possibly because the employees were skilled and difficult to replace – but individual managers provided flexibility at tacit and informal levels, humanising the relationship and adding value to job products. She continues:

“we felt probably rightly that we were somewhat of an elite because everyone there was highly trained and had either been trained into the job or had been recruited with a reasonably high level of education or previous experience. So there was definitely a...y’know, a kind of a feeling that that was acknowledged, y’know – that it was kind of like “you’re a skilled site, and we acknowledge that”, and this kind of thing.”

Skilled and highly remunerated workers seem to attract benefits, their organisations appearing more willing to create job products addressing a range of employee needs.

However, this seems less widespread amongst junior roles in more poorly-paid industries with an accessible supply of alternative labour. Practitioners should consider the effects of this, not just on employees' satisfaction and loyalty levels, but on the overall efficacy of their IM.

7.9) Internal Marketing's motivation of staff towards the achievement of organisational goals

Whilst most participants mentioned IM's motivation of staff and improvement to morale, this was often outside the context of achieving organisational goals.

Hamish indicated that motivation would be driven by

“having that regular communication and having the regular channels for our people to communicate through...so the whole organisation gets that feel-good factor.”

Being connected to colleagues and having input into the organisation empowers staff and prevents alienation (Conduit & Mavondo, 2001).

Gary explained the importance of small value but symbolic rewards which were tokens of recognition and appreciation from managers:

“It was important with the staff, primarily the celebration of milestones. Maybe it was a sort of “Ok, let's all have a night out” or “Ok, everyone's getting cream buns on Friday” or whatever. They didn't have to be big things, but just a case of...recognition for some people who had maybe been fundamental in bringing the project forward.”

Aside from motivation value, giving rewards at 'milestones' may help stakeholders break up a long process psychologically, reducing mental fatigue.

Roger suggested that, in small groups, motivation amongst staff may be intrinsic, stemming from duty or self-esteem:

“Where I work...you very much rely on your professional pride, that you’ve done a good job. But there isn’t a lot of what you would call praise, recognition or anything like that. It just doesn’t seem to work like that when you’re in a small team.”

Perhaps also in a small group there is less opportunity for an employee to hide and a greater sense of reciprocity and obligation to one’s colleagues (Cialdini, 1993).

There was broad agreement that IM should motivate staff, even when not explicitly linked to organisational goals. Eddie commented that,

“If it’s not motivational, then it’s information flow. It’s hardly even Marketing – it’s just communication.”

Some organisations seem to seek staff performance improvements to achieve organisational goals (Grönroos, 1981), but fail to place them within the larger performance landscape, so employees miss the big picture. Arthur, voicing his experiences, describes a very procedural approach:

“So when things go well, people say, “Oh, you did really well. You did a good job.” Even then, I don’t see much effect, but when things go wrong, they don’t really explore. I mean, they don’t really try to know why it went wrong. They just focus on when things go wrong...the staff who took it in a positive note, they tried to work harder and harder, and they tried to go the extra mile when needed.”

By neglecting to inform future actions with the experiences of today’s mistakes, his organisation’s IM is reactive, restricted to positive reinforcement of desired performances and maybe behaviours, perhaps perceived by staff as paternalistic. Even in a highly skilled industry, such as Bev’s, the organisational goals and actions for achieving them may be oversimplified in their communication:

“our objectives were mostly “do your job” – that was one – and then we had other little things like, y’know, “bring in one safety improvement” or “go on a course” or, y’know, “try not to speak nastily to the person next door because I’ve noticed you’re having trouble with them”. It was that kind of thing...but now we have site objectives which translates into a departmental objective which translates into a personal objective.”

Whilst this latter system of translating the big picture into individual expectations is undoubtedly better than “do your job”, it fails to communicate what the organisation represents and what employees should strive towards. Through her experiences in a university, Jessie suggested it may be more effective to recruit staff who are motivated towards certain objectives than to instil that motivation in people retroactively:

“I think because of the type of people that work here, it tends to be, not taken for granted, but I think stuff just kind of happens anyway without really needing to be told about it.”

However, even a workforce motivated towards organisational objectives needs goals quantifying, and encouragement towards them:

“what they want to do is work towards certain outcomes that they want by a certain date, and I think they’ve basically made it so that everyone is trying to push towards the same things, which is probably good, and you probably get economies of scale doing it that way.”

This indicates that, whilst employees may share high motivation levels, some ‘stepping stones’ to the final outcome may need identifying to bring unity of purpose.

Discussing organisational goals towards which employees should be motivated by IM, Jessie commented that

“a lot of them are much more higher level stuff, so it’s not stuff like I feel I can really get involved with, so I’m sure there’s like recruitment goals, where they want so many certain level of students and so many students from overseas and stuff enrolled, but because that’s not something I can really influence at all, there’s not really much point in me knowing about it. There’s not a lot I can do with it really.”

There are goals applicable to all staff, and those specific to certain functions and, whilst there may be value in communicating objectives pursued by other functions (to dismantle a silo mentality), this appears most effective when contextualised so everybody can relate (Kale, 2012).

Sometimes barriers to identification with organisational goals are not interdepartmental, as Jessie described, but hierarchical, as described by Hamish through some telling imagery:

“I think lack of understanding is the main barrier, because in all service like our services, people are doing the same thing every day, churning through the same work every day, you know, like [processing customers]. So it’s just [customers in, deal with them], follow up the ones who need following up, put the other lot back – and that’s just it. So these strategic things that come along which have an impact on us and it’s difficult to get staff to say “This is going to be great” because actually we’re doing what we need to do. And for us as an organisation, what we need to do is quite set out, proscribed and just goals – that’s it!”

As Hamish inferred, certain job functions are driven by quantifiable measures, and one may assume that organisation-level objectives are met through cumulative achievement of these employee- and department-level goals. However, IM helps in communicating the value of individual staff contributions to prevent alienation.

Indeed, Winifred describes how she embedded the pursuit of small goals, and the main actors engaged in that part of the ‘plot’:

“there was always a need for me to look for incremental gains – little steps forward to make it more efficient, to bring in more money which we could then invest...although I anticipated that this would be somewhat difficult to measure and possibly quite a long way down the line.”

Winifred is also driven by organisational goals. She explains that her CEO status afforded her time, perhaps denied more junior managers charged with leading IM strategy:

“Maybe that’s the reason you don’t see more of that kind of thing – CEOs can be a little bit like five year governments. They need to focus on the present, deal with the things which

are urgent and looming and – let's be honest – the things which are going to make a difference to their profile to board members and keep them in the position.”

These findings suggest a lack of agreement over whether staff should be motivated towards organisational aims through a top-down or bottom-up processes (i.e. – if communication of organisational aims should trickle down to departmental and individual level, or vice versa). It appears that the orientation of staff towards organisational goals is more important in certain industries and roles where the processes and outcomes of an employee's daily routine are not proscribed.

7.10) Internal Marketing's encouragement of internal market research and exchange, and its facilitation of the transmission of organisational knowledge and the growth of organisational competencies

Perhaps surprisingly, participants barely mentioned IM's capacity to encourage internal market research and exchange (Lindner & Wald, 2011), although several covered adjacent topics whilst discussing integration and the dismantling of silos (Reardon & Enis, 1990), and most discussed their experiences of IM implanting organisational knowledge and competencies. The exception is Owen, who describes how IM facilitated a process in which

“they take any recommendations from the Internal Working Group to the Senior Management Meeting, but because it's a charity, any major changes in direction, or any alterations in directions, need to go through the Board of Trustees of the charity”.

In this respect, IM in his organisation acts as a vertical conduit within a hierarchical structure, enabling the gathering of opinions and data for board level decision making, democratising strategy formulation. This is significant as IM, when conceptualised as an integrative mechanism, is usually considered an enabler of horizontal, rather than vertical, information flow (e.g. – Varey, 1995; Varey & Lewis, 1999). Owen explains the process in more detail:

“Deputy Chief Exec taking it to a Senior Management Meeting to say that the Internal Working Group have raised x, y and z issues and would like them addressed, or changed or altered, in a manner. And senior management then has to decide whether the view of the Working Group echoes the company’s charitable objectives, and if they think that it does, then they would have to take it to the Board of Trustees, before the Board of Trustees would allow a change in direction.”

He explains elsewhere that it is not only strategic discussions which flourish in this way, but also those concerning internal job products, like the possible provision of bicycle housing for employees.

Winifred explained how her introduction of a buddying and job shadowing scheme gave staff a more holistic understanding of the organisation, empowering them and instilling organisational identity – and nurturing organisational competencies, spreading its values:

“We introduced it first for new members of staff. We wanted to make sure they felt comfortable in their job roles and knew what they were supposed to be doing, and that they had a dedicated and formalised point of contact where they could go if they had any questions, problems or uncertainties.”

Indeed, if the scheme fulfils these objectives, it should boost productivity. However, Winifred explains,

“it was more about getting people to see the big picture and to feel a part of something bigger. To understand their role and contribution to the organisation and its customers and, I suppose, to enable them to see an end product for their labours”.

Owen discussed how IM promotes the values and competencies which the organisation expects staff to embrace, ensuring that employees in different areas can learn from each other’s expertise to deliver greater stakeholder value:

“to read and to absorb and to disseminate salient points relating to what activities colleagues are engaged in, so that their messages and their activities can be promoted by me when I am doing my job, reaching an audience which those colleagues wouldn’t normally be interacting with. And similarly, I’d hope in reverse, that colleagues who are

involved with, say, political stakeholders, they can engage with them and disseminate information to them relating to the various training products and courses that we offer, so that there's a better understanding across all staff about activities...the organisation are involved in, so that that's better promoted cross-organisationally."

It seems that customer-facing employees offer a wider range of services and draw upon broader knowledge, due to IM having disseminated information, but also transmitted values.

Lizzie described two ways in which desired values were communicated within her organisation – by secondment, and informal staff meetings:

"[secondment is] part of their working process. Yeah, the working in the local authority was quite an eye-opener really, in terms of how it could be improved."

Hamish, the senior public sector manager, complained that the spread of organisational competencies and values is hindered by internal operational barriers, like poor technology:

"we've got all these big ambitions about reform but we haven't got IT tools to do any of this. We're still using out of date tools. And managers, to be fair, are working to try and rectify this, but we're never convinced these things will work, cos even these things are driven top-down. There's not a lot of what you'd call pilot testing. There's not a lot of 'can the user actually use these IT tools?' So there's not a lot of consultation."

In the case study, Roger echoed these comments, saying staff become alienated when organisational capabilities trail the demands made upon the staff.

Regional Manager, Eddie, focused on the abilities and aptitudes of senior management in the context of how they tackled IM when appraising organisational competencies:

"You need to know – I honestly believe you need to know – what impact your personality and the words you're using are having on other people. And we're back to empathy, and people say things without giving it proper thought."

Eddie seems particularly aware of his superiors' abilities because the organisation trained him in those specific competencies. He used that to become more effective when facing external customers, and is more informed in his judgment of his own senior managers, having higher expectations:

"I can think of things that were taught to me 20 to 25 years ago that I still use today. The reference to Transactional Analysis dates back at least 25 years".

If an organisation trains staff in an area, failure of its senior managers to be competent in that same area – if relevant to their role and visible to staff – is often critically received.

Hamish suggested that IM encounters three more barriers to embedding organisational values and competencies – differing motivation levels across job grades, the use of external agencies not sharing those values, and the applicability of those values to certain professionals. Of differing motivation levels, and colleagues' attitudes towards relationships, he explains:

"I don't know how you'd get, um, a lot of lower banding staff to be arsed to even understand it, but a lot of people, all they want to do is come to work, do their job, and go home. And as soon as you mention the word 'strategy', or..."brand new initiative – everyone needs to do it", nah, you're like, "Here we go again! Um, I only get paid ten grand a year, and I'm really not interested"."

Although the reasons for such an attitude are neglected, Hamish's comments suggest the lowest paid staff may perceive their relationship with the organisation as transactional and defined contractually, and be less likely to engage on the level of values, suggesting that future research into this phenomenon would be useful to help improve the efficacy of IM across a stratified organisation.

Hamish was cynical about his experience of outsourced agencies:

"because the challenge is so big – yes, we know – [the organisation] has got to radically change the way it is working – yes, we know that, yes, so to do that we're gonna bring in

[a major consultancy company] and we're gonna pay them 120 grand a week and they're gonna profit-manage organisational development for [the organisation], you know. Um, it's quite cack-handedly done, I think. It's clumsy and not very well thought out. It's not engaging."

Outsourced agencies may fail to understand or respect the values, traditions and organisational contexts on which IM initiatives should be built, reducing their viability.

Hamish noted that certain organisational values may be more applicable to certain functions and personnel, due to their job characteristics, interaction with stakeholders and types of value which they deliver:

"[Those people are our top professionals because they're good at what they do]. Most of them are absolutely useless at talking to [customers], you know. As far as they're concerned, the outcome for the [customer is the successful delivery of the service]."

It appears that some employees are so prized by external customers for the specialised service which they deliver that some of those values which IM propagates may be perceived as irrelevant or less important. Therefore, IM practitioners may consider if they adopt a blanket approach or target specific objectives at a segmented audience when encouraging the adoption of organisational values.

7.11) Internal Marketing's instigation of effective internal communications

The aspect of IM which participants were keenest to discuss was its instigation of effective internal communications (Hogg et al, 1998; Kale, 2012). They described methods of communication, often operationally, the characteristics of communications and those making them, their ideas regarding what constitutes good IM communication, and their experiences of ineffective communications and their effects. Whilst informative, some participants did not distinguish between communications forming part of an IM strategy, and those occurring due to the internal conditions fostered by IM.

In terms of communication methods, most participants, like Jessie the academic, complained that

“we do get a lot of emails, but the emails are very long, and to be honest, when I start the first two sentences, if it hasn’t immediately grabbed my attention – which they rarely do – I don’t read the rest of the email.”

Most participants echoed this, saying that time constraints force them to be selective in their reading. Many workplace communicators seemingly ignore the principles of marketing commonly understood in an external market context, regarding the need for concise, easily internalised messages (Fill, 2006).

A few participants also described those informal, ad hoc meetings which occur at water-coolers and photocopiers, fostering tacit, word-of-mouth communication. Eddie commented on the actors performing this subtle part of the IM ‘plot’ that

“I think that in any large organisation, there will be those people who are recognised as being reliable spreaders. And the conversation will usually start with “I will tell you this, but you mustn’t tell anybody else”. And any large organisation will have its leaks...they are what my mother used to say were like skinned monkeys – one end closes and the other end flies open.”

As he explained, WOM may be a useful, credible way for organisations to disseminate messages to staff and, by listening out for specific conversation later, they may gauge how well the message has spread:

“it’s not enough simply to create and send a message. You actually have to have tap-in points up the line to say “what have you heard?””

However, using WOM may be problematic, as Eddie joked through an illuminating use of imagery:

“during the First World War when they had a note which came back to headquarters saying “Send three and four pence, we’re going to a dance”. And the guy looked at this

and said, "What does this mean?" And they traced the message back and it actually started as "Send reinforcements, we're going to advance"!

The serious point is that for every intermediary, a message risks distortion from its original meaning. Arthur considered this problematic as messages cross hierarchical boundaries:

"when the management communicate it to the level down, it reaches differently, and then these managers try to interpret it in their own conscious, and then they communicate their own message differently...I would not say most time, but fifty percent of times it reaches with like the proper message, but fifty percent of times it's lost somewhere."

Jessie's university has perhaps sought to avoid this by ensuring that some communication is transacted directly with staff of all seniority levels, and this has been interactive:

"they'd been doing initial interviews with people as well, interviewing them about their perceptions of the faculty and whatever. And I think they were going to get them to do some focus group things [to determine what the brand characteristics should be]."

By including staff ostensibly in its formulation of (internal and external) marketing strategy, it empowers them, encouraging positive WOM.

Several participants described their organisations' use of good news stories to showcase desirable behaviours and give recognition. These were usually followed up in meetings. Most organisations were guilty of sometimes communicating too much, but one in particular – Bev's – was so uncommunicative that it failed to warn staff about an impending takeover, and had to improvise an emergency response:

"I don't know why it came out. There was a guy on the door, on the gate, handing out a press release as we drove through the gates to the site. The same day, I heard on the radio on the way in, so, I don't know, it was like they were going to announce it that morning but I don't know if someone got wind of it."

If we are to consider internal PR as important within IM, this organisation was negligent and undermined employee goodwill and trust.

A common theme within interviews was the need for face-to-face contact within IM, which may be difficult to achieve satisfactorily. As Hamish explained, for executives, being based centrally is

“difficult...you can do video-conferencing, but there’s a lot to be said for eyeballing – especially if you’re the boss, or you’re at that very senior level where, you know, those other people [at the other end of the region] are going to have to implement your strategy and your plan, and they’re not going to do that if they’ve never seen your face.”

The importance of humanising relationships and the IM process (Berry, 1984; Lings, 2004) is emphasised. Staff appear more likely to embrace the ideas of someone whom they have met, feeling increased obligation and reciprocity. Whilst IM must sometimes use non-personal, asynchronous communications, these should ideally be complemented with personal interaction.

It also appears important that human interaction, and the humanising of IM initiatives, are undertaken empathetically by representatives with whom the audience can relate. Jessie was critical of her senior executives for being too slick and corporate, disproportionately privileged, and too optimistic in their tone:

“its’ a little bit like when you see those American motivating people and they’re all a bit too much, and then there’s like corporate videos that they’ve got going and there’s like this happy-clappy music and everything’s all sunshiny...they’re all a bit overly smiley and a bit overly slick...there doesn’t seem to be like a lot of humanity in there. It’s like a little bit too like corporate feeling. Like them and us.”

She found it impossible to accept as sincere the spirit in which difficult news was delivered by a privileged leader. Lack of credibility and empathy may result in the audience perceiving the IM initiative, message and leader as disingenuous and, inadvertently or otherwise, result in ID – a phenomenon explored in the next chapter.

7.12) Internal Marketing's agency for organisational change

All participants acknowledged IM's potential to engender organisational change (Varey & Lewis, 1999; Winston & Cahill, 2012) and, although several discussed inhibiting factors and triggers for staff resistance, common themes for its successful deployment emerged. One was empathy with those staff targeted by IM, and the ability to plan for resistance. Winifred, the major strategist and decision maker of IM in her organisation, explained:

"If we were in the position of most of staff – having these changes brought to our office doors by more senior colleagues – then we would no doubt feel just the same. So we had to put ourselves in their shoes, try to understand the reasons behind any intransigence or reluctance, and work out how we were going to deal with it."

One rung below board level, Hamish uses his 'voice' to outline his expectations for, and experiences of, IM, and to note the IM role he perceives for himself:

"it's used by my board and exec team to empower me, or attempt to empower me – that's the intention – to spread the organisation's strategic views and objectives out, and to develop plans to ensure they implement it. So, at that level, you almost become the enactor of change. So you're doing everything for somebody else, yeah, so therefore you're taking all the crap for them as well."

Interestingly, not only must Hamish ensure that his board's IM strategy is implemented successfully, but he also perceives himself as a key beneficiary of this IM, believing that it – or its cultural landscape – empower him to do his job and enact change. Senior managers may be both benefactors to, and beneficiaries of, IM.

In larger organisations particularly, it appears important for IM initiatives to be cascaded to gain traction and instigate organisational change, and the transmission of IM is often entrusted to non-Marketing professionals.

Participants discussed resistance to change within IM implementation, the reasons for it, and its manifestations. Gary's role had been hindered by working with an outsourced agency which overcomplicated the IM process:

"They were primarily meant to be the project management specialists, although we had project management people. And they were primarily on the process side. But part of what they do is make a huge process out of the project."

He described how this delayed the initiative, undermining support from his superior:

"I was fulfilling the role, and he and I fell out because of it. And it wasn't my fault. I tried to say to him, you know, "This isn't me, you know. You shouldn't attack me on this or feel like I'm letting you down". He was shooting the messenger, basically. So yes, huge problems in change management there, so we had to work really very very hard to keep as many people on side as possible."

Both Hamish and Gary commented that external agencies may obfuscate IM messages, elongating implementation, and confusing or alienating audiences, leaving in-house managers to retrieve the situation.

Some resistance to change which undermines IM may be caused by egos, insecurities, power structures and belligerence amongst the audience. Building the plot through narrative, Gary remembered one pocket of resistance with amusement:

"We had a Regional Manager...he was notorious for having a fiefdom...I was conscious of this guy – I knew of him and I knew of his reputation. I'd never worked for him before, but I knew the animal...this fella was putting up barriers all the way down or hurdles for me to jump over, because as I say he was very big on power and control, and I was sort of not wanting to get stuck into that argument – "Look, you've got to change" sort of style."

A manager implementing IM may struggle to overcome resistance, perhaps taking the line of least resistance, avoiding conflict and concentrating on more receptive audience segments, although this would fail to address intransigence. Here, the unwilling audience was seemingly driven by power and ego, but sometimes – as discussed by Winifred – insecurity plays a role:

"People are sometimes fearful of change, aren't they? They can worry that they might not be able to fit into a new system, that it will make their lives less enjoyable, that it will mean

a greater time commitment or take them outside their comfort zones – and all this is perfectly understandable.”

In confronting this, Winifred and her colleagues

“had to tackle the less willing staff members, albeit in a gentle way, firmly and head-on by having a bit of a charm offensive, but also by selling the benefits of what we were trying to do and also stressing the lack of risk or upheaval that it means to them.”

Just as traditional external marketing conveys purchase decision benefits and allays customers' fears over potential risks (Fill, 2006), so Winifred used IM to achieve the same ends in her workforce.

Certain organisational changes are so unpalatable to internal stakeholders that IM initiatives may not gain traction, and the management actions may be considered damage limitation by internal PR. Hamish described two instances of this – one when two separate groups of stakeholders were forced to merge and expected to adopt common, generic values, the other when a new change was imposed before the previous change had been completed. Both Hamish and Gary described - when using their voices to explain their experiences of IM and their self-concepts within those experiences - feeling fatigued by conducting IM in conditions which generated hostility, with Les commenting that

“I personally had begun to really hate the role, because I was constantly going to important people senior to me, and saying “I’m sorry, we can’t do this” – so much so that one guy just, I’m sure, he just looked at me and just thought every negative thought you could have of a person, and the job and the role and everything. Which is unfortunate, you know, because I was fulfilling the role, and he and I fell out because of it. And it wasn’t my fault. I tried to say to him, you know, “This isn’t me, you know. You shouldn’t attack me on this or feel like I’m letting you down”. He was shooting the messenger, basically. So yes, huge problems in change management there.”

It may not be in the employee's perceived interests to embrace the change sought by IM, and it may be damaging to the career of the manager charged with implementing change through IM if resistance occurs. This could discourage managers from those aspects of IM

dealing with organisational change, designing such ambitions out of IM strategies, or trying to avoid IM altogether.

Just as conflict within marketing channels may be cognitive, affective or behavioural (Rosenberg, 1974; Gaski, 1989), simmering covertly or presenting itself as an outward manifestation, so resistance to IM may be hidden. Winifred explained that

“We didn’t have any open rebellion, but I suspect there were a couple of older staff members who pretended to participate but didn’t – like unwilling audience members”,

whom she reached through staff questionnaires analysed by a consultant to formulate a tailored approach.

Bev suggested that, once IM had been deployed to facilitate organisational change and that change had occurred (in this case, redistribution of staff across sites), the organisation then abandoned IM:

“They weren’t really quite bothered to keep the momentum going and to try and engender a different attitude.”

This seems a wasted opportunity to reap ongoing benefits if IM is already accepted and embedded during a time of flux. Indeed, she discussed elsewhere that, when her organisation was later taken over, the workforce learned this from a radio report the day before a hastily arranged management announcement to the staff – the damaging short-termism which IM could have averted.

If IM’s role in implementing organisational change is to be fulfilled, it appears important that implementers are protected from negative effects of resistance, that the reasons for stakeholder resistance and ways to overcome it are considered, and that organisations do not abandon IM once change is affected.

7.13) Internal Marketing's role in streamlining internal processes, and in acting as an integrative mechanism to discourage silo mentality

Participants unanimously agreed that IM integrates their colleagues (Varey, 1995; Ballantyne, 1997; Kelemen, 2000; Hume & Hume, 2014) – especially across different departments, locations and hierarchical levels – discouraging a silo mentality, although there was less focus on its streamlining of internal processes. Lizzie, who had introduced several highly visible IM initiatives within her employee-owned organisation, commented that she prioritised integration of field-based staff:

“if it's something where there's been a meeting held and it's not suitable for everyone to come here, then one of the managers would go to the offices and communicate it to them.”

Whilst this may be operational, it is symptomatic of an organisation pooling resources to ensure commercial opportunities and employee efforts are capitalised upon:

“a lot of the business units overlap in terms of their service audiences, so somebody could be spending a lot of time trying to get into a business that somebody's already working with, so by having another platform where somebody could just...say “I'm looking to get into 'x'. Is anyone doing anything with them?” It's just another way of doing it.”

Not only should this approach maximise the benefits of employee efforts, but also raise awareness and appreciation of colleagues' work, reducing cannibalisation within their customer-facing activity. Notably, the organisation does not seek simply to integrate staff operationally, but also culturally:

“in the early days, when we had the remote offices – “we don't find out what's going on, we're not included in everything” – so in Marketing, we made a real effort to [ask], “Well, if we're doing that in [the main office], how are we doing it in the remote offices?” So it could be something as simple as we're doing a sweep for something.”

By including geographically remote employees in social activities, Lizzie prevents them from feeling isolated, alienated and resentful of head office. However, nurturing an inclusive, democratised organisational culture through IM can bring its own challenges:

“I would say, if you’re doing something new, everybody wants an input, which is obviously great, because you want everybody to have an input, but sometimes that can be quite difficult to manage. And you’ve got to be careful that you’re not putting people out and then they won’t input. So it’s getting that balance, I guess.”

A manager consulting too deeply with staff may lose the ability to move quickly, but Lizzie hinted that, if consensual qualities are demonstrated conspicuously at regular intervals, a manager would be allowed by staff to act assertively when necessary. Several of her initiatives allowed her this freedom.

Owen, in a similar organisation to Lizzie’s, described more relationships and contexts informing IM, and particularly how staff integration could maximise commercial opportunities by pooling knowledge and expertise:

“the perceived wisdom is that colleagues who are working in political lobbying will be better able to talk to the stakeholders who they meet about activities that are happening in the training department and to promote that. And similarly, when I’m teaching training courses, if someone’s asking questions about policy and political issues, I’d be better informed to be aware of what my colleagues in that area of the charity are doing...similarly people who are involved in political lobbying can better promote training courses in the hope that there’s more people for me to teach in the coming weeks and months.”

It appears that potential benefits accrue not just to the organisation commercially, and to the employee, but also to external stakeholders through improved service levels. Owen suggests this integration builds upon the Internal Working Group Meetings occurring every month or two:

“I would say there are good lines of communication...sometimes nothing to do with the strategic aims of the organisation, of how the organisation successfully campaigns its messages, are discussed. Sometimes it’s about the internal workings of the office – “Can we have more recycling bins? Can we have cycle storage for staff? The staff shower isn’t being cleaned by the cleaners” – and just workplace gripes. Whereas at other times,

discussions will focus on the charity's objectives and how people can work better to enable the charity to achieve its charitable objectives."

This appears to tell staff that their concerns are considered equal to those of external stakeholders, ensuring they do not feel secondary. To make this an integrative process, there are representatives from across all hierarchical levels and different departments.

Whilst the importance of integrative objectives within IM (Varey & Lewis, 1999) were recognised by all participants, not all considered their organisations successful in this respect. Roger, facing redundancies and a hostile internal environment, noted that

"in terms of immediate colleagues, well there is a small group of us so there is a natural desire to protect ourselves because, as I say, five years ago we went through a potential site closure and that caused a lot of insecurity and stress."

It appears that, without employee confidence and trust in the organisation, staff may close ranks against outsiders, rather than reaching across organisational boundaries. Likewise, if superiors are unaware how their staff feel or act, hierarchical barriers may be insurmountable:

"I don't think the director is so aware of his audience and what his audience wants or what his audience is thinking, so it becomes a little bit of a...rather than an interactive discussion, more of a "let me tell you what I'm doing", y'know, which often can be completely irrelevant to what you're doing."

Perhaps to enact integrative IM, practitioners must qualify their audiences as a salesperson would qualify their customer, avoiding generic conversations which fail to resonate and remove barriers. Arthur, also critical of his organisation's ability to integrate staff, noted that

"there's been some gap in there - If the top management is from ethnic – a different ethnic – they might communicate differently. And in turn, if the management is from the ethnic...where there is not much gap between the management and the bottom level, they tend to communicate more. But where the management is coming from the different

ethnic, there is a gap between the management and the staff – they tend to communicate less.”

Here, Arthur, an Indian immigrant, does not suggest that prejudice is a barrier, but that different ethnic groups communicate differently - or perhaps feel more relaxed and communicate freely with colleagues of shared ethnicity – and that IM has not addressed this. If we consider the hierarchical barriers within his organisation not effectively dismantled through IM, it has floundered in the face of workplace intersectionality.

Gary, in his amusing narrative on the organisational context, noticed the cultural difficulties which IM encountered when his rather conservative organisation merged with a youthful and modern counterpart:

“You had in [their head office] a whole warehouse type building full of people on headsets and that. In polo shirts – my God!..so you had people there who were very much in role, in culture, in suits, going down into like an atrium area for lunch or what-have-you, and all these young kids would come bounding in like some young school kids in polo shirts and everything, and...you could definitely see the differences, and you could actually pull them apart again later on.”

In this example, the two merged companies sold related products to a different external market segment using vastly different approaches to marketing and sales, thus having brands and workforces displaying contrasting characteristics – obstructing workplace integration.

Hamish perceived IM's role in dismantling silos as particularly difficult in his organisation, spread across many geographically diverse sites incorporating vastly different job roles. This begins at board level, with a Chief Executive and Chair who are

“not based at [service centres]. And their argument would say, well, that's because we don't want to take up office space...so the Chief Exec goes to visit the [service centres], where the queen – you know, everywhere the queen goes, she always smells paint, doesn't she? – and everywhere the Chief Exec goes these days...it's always stage-managed by middle management.”

However honourably intentioned their decision, these senior figureheads are invisible to employees and have reduced their scrutiny of day-to-day operations. Hamish maintains that, when dismantling silos,

“you target where you know you’re going to get the most, the best, amount of input and constructiveness really”,

which may be a logical way to allocate resources, but potentially negates part of IM's remit by failing to tackle those pockets of resistance most in need of integration. Indeed,

“there is a hard core of staff which does like that barrier being there. They spend all their time moaning about it, and then when it’s broken down, they try to keep it there. Because it suits their agenda, their personal agenda or the local agenda.”

Elsewhere, Hamish notes that some trade union representatives default to a position of resistance, even when initiatives pose no threat to employees' interests. The resistance goes beyond those stakeholders to employees fearful of change, distrusting of management or fostering an 'us and them' mentality:

“we’re an all-[region] service that happens to be in [its main city], and one thing with [the region] is all the parochialism, so if it’s [main city]-centric, it’s for [the main city], yeah? So, there was an organisation in [the region] called [P.C.F.], so we used to commission special services, and in [other parts of the region] it was known as “Put the City First”.”

Even where geographically dispersed stakeholders do not perceive themselves as disadvantaged comparative to head office counterparts, resentment between social groups often spreads (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1961). Whilst IM facilitates integration of staff and dismantles silos, the barriers to this are significant and widespread.

7.14) Internal Marketing's contribution to the management of organisational culture

IM may change organisational culture, encouraging employee adoption of values embedded within IM initiatives (Winston & Cahill, 2012). As Owen illustrates, resistance to

this, intransigence or lack of employee motivation may exist, especially where the staff member perceives their employment in transactional terms:

“They’re employed to carry out a set number of tasks. Whether they politically, ethically, socially, morally agree with everything or not, the organisation can’t change that really.”

However, such resistance may stem from a lack of employee understanding of the values, or – more accurately – a failure of the organisation to convey them properly. As Winifred said,

“I believe that if staff understand what the organisation stands for in terms of its values, then they are more likely to adopt and embrace those values, and even display them in dealings with customers”.

Perhaps the probability of employee adoption of organisational values, and the ability of IM to transmit and implant those values, is dependent upon the attractiveness of those values. Roger was asked how his organisation might describe itself:

“I think the organisation would describe itself as a sort of caring grandfather, quite a paternalistic view...a sort of philanthropist...[but the current managers, adapting those values] still like to retain those old Etonian values...a sort of old-fashioned philanthropist...probably a One Nation Conservative.”

Clearly Roger accepts the core values of his organisation, but disagrees with their reinterpretation and communication by senior management.

Hamish described how IM serves the culture of his organisation:

“It’s a very autocratic culture, so you might as well not have...your plan might as well be about how you empower staff to develop services themselves, and teach everyone that.”

Jessie understood the values of her university to cluster around the concept of collegiality:

“My understanding of collegiality – here anyway – is when everyone’s working together to try and get to the same end. They’re putting in the effort to go the extra mile and help people out and be part of a team”.

Despite Jessie and Hamish perceiving the core values of their organisations as fundamentally different, most ways in which IM disseminated those values were very similar.

Owen, working for an organisation which displays its values conspicuously when interacting with internal and external stakeholders, described the context thus:

“The core values are to campaign, to take positive action and to influence policy makers to help vulnerable households who are unable to heat their homes, and those key messages are reinforced on a sort of a weekly basis really, of what colleagues and each of the four departments at work have done over the previous week in order to achieve those ends...my workplace will internally market the charity’s core values and promote the activities of members of staff in different departments so that the organisation better shares and better understands what other colleagues are doing to enable the charity to reach its core audience.”

In this organisation, values influence policy and give a distinctive identity to which the separate departments comply, and perhaps for this reason – and because Owen is committed to his organisation’s ethos – he is extremely conversant with them. This contrasts with Arthur’s experiences of a fast food restaurant chain, where the values were submerged beneath operational tick-lists.

Jessie noticed a difference between the importance which her university attached to understanding and conveying values, compared with her SME former employer:

“In the industry side of things I’d come from, they just didn’t give a rat’s arse what that was about, like, as long as it had a company logo slapped on somewhere that would be fine”,

whereas her university asked employees of all grades to participate in focus groups, defining intended values. Awareness and acceptance of conveying values appear to vary

greatly across different organisations, perhaps linked to industry, company size or other factors.

Winifred implied that values could be transmitted more easily in a caring industry, but also that this would depend upon personalities in key positions within the organisation:

“The relationship between the organisation and the staff was always very good. A lot of that would be down to the fact that it’s perhaps not the hardest industry – it’s not like the Army or even the Civil Service – there’s not that desire or need to stick rigidly to a hierarchical structure and to know your place, and we didn’t really have any big egos higher up the organisation. People would just treat everyone else with respect and openness.”

It has already been observed (through Bev) that some organisations use IM to overcome difficulties but then abandon it when the danger has passed, rather than considering it a longitudinal, permanent strategy. Eddie warned against this:

“things like company values have to be reinforced on a regular basis, and it’s like spinning plates. If you don’t spin them, then they eventually fall off. And it can’t be the same message over and over again.”

Eddie evidently believes that values should be instilled in employees through the repeated actions and communication of the organisation, rather than through a campaign:

“I suppose when you join a company, you should be given a company handbook...You’re meant to know what you were hired for. Your line manager or whatever should give you a clear indication of your day-to-day, month-to-month, or even annual, objectives. Are the values of the company marketed to you? I don’t know really in that sense. I think that people react to a perceived drop in reputation by restating customer values – “the customer comes first”.”

By encouraging employees to embrace values which are clearly identified, consistent and permanent, organisations can achieve a commonality of approach from their staff towards the delivery of customer-facing services (Winston & Cahill, 2012), which should subsequently produce increased customer loyalty, satisfaction and other commercial gains.

7.15) Main interview themes by participant

During the semi-structured phenomenological interviews, the dominant themes discussed by each of the participants were as per the table overleaf:

Participant	Role	Major themes
Roger	Government manager	ID, relationalism and integration of staff, jobs products, organisational change, HR policy.
Jessie	University academic	Staff satisfaction, retention and recruitment, ID, job products.
Hamish	Public Sector senior manager	Organisational change and culture, staff integration, internal communications.
Owen	Trainer for energy charity	Organisational values and goals, job products, staff integration, customer orientation, encouragement of internal market research and exchange.
Lizzie	Marketing Manager for employee-owned SME	Internal communications, job products, staff integration and satisfaction.
Eddie	Regional Manager for major manufacturer	Internal communications, staff integration.
Bev	Bio scientist	Organisational change and values, internal communication, job products.
Winifred	CEO of charity	Organisational values and culture, job products, internal communications, staff satisfaction and retention, relationalism and interactivity, staff performance levels, motivation towards organisational goals, integration.
Arthur	Fast food restaurant team leader	Internal communication, organisational culture and goals, integration and relationalism.
Gary	Insurance company senior manager	Organisational change and culture, integration, internal communications.
Stella	Local government clerical officer	Breaking down of silos
Desmond	Primary school teacher	Change management
Esther	University administrator	Change management
Janet	University cleaner	(mainly operational)
Tom	Senior gas engineer	(mainly operational)

Table 6: Main research themes by participant.

Relative to the extant literature, participants were more aware of some aspects of IM's capabilities, such as its role in communicating to and integrating diverse staff groups, and had been exposed more to those aspects, whereas they seemed less aware of other

aspects such as its role in encouraging internal market research and exchange. This may be because the latter aspect is more remote from most stakeholders' experiences, or less emotive.

Much of the extant literature, largely lacking multi-stakeholder perspectives from different industries and levels of seniority, appears insufficiently nuanced or acknowledging of IM's effects upon employees. Moreover, these deficiencies may have contributed to the practice of poor, counterproductive IM, and the ID explored within the next chapter.

7.16) Summary of Chapter 7

The chapter discussed findings from analysed data arising from the semi-structured phenomenological interviews. Amongst the aspects of IM considered were its capacity to transfer traditional advantages of marketing approaches to the internal market, resulting in increased staff performance, relationalism and satisfaction. Its role in the recruitment and retention of staff, and in orienting staff towards external customers, was analysed. Consideration was given to its function as a conduit for HR strategy, the pursuance of organisational goals, and its ability to encourage staff to perceive jobs as products. There was also discussion of its transmission of organisational knowledge and competencies, its fostering of internal communications and organisational change, its role in streamlining internal processes and as an integrative mechanism discouraging a silo mentality, and its contribution to the management of organisational culture.

The next chapter will analyse findings from the case study, focusing specifically on the emerging theme of ID, and taxonomising it to propose the concepts of Unintentional ID, Ostensible IM, Selective IM and Selective ID.

Chapter 8) Findings and Analysis of the Case Study: Internal Demarketing

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“Internal Marketing is a planned effort using a marketing-like approach...to align, motivate and inter-functionally co-ordinate and integrate employees...to deliver customer satisfaction through a process of creating motivated and customer orientated employees.”

(Rafiq & Ahmed, 2002, p.454)

“Demarketing can be defined as the deliberate attempt by marketers to reduce demand for a product by using the same tools and techniques as are normally used to increase demand.”

(Bradley & Blythe, 2014, p.1)

“Internal Demarketing is regarded as a sort of corporate illness that is closely associated with high and middle managers’ actions, decisions, and behaviors that are capable of triggering negative perceptions at work settings that can potentially lead to the decrease of productivity and/or poor organizational performance.”

(Vasconcelos, 2011, p.35)

8.1) The role and purpose of the case study

IM can increase employee motivation, customer orientation, cross-functional integration and alignment of staff, capitalising upon commonly accepted external marketing practices by applying them within the workforce, and implementing strategies by overcoming resistance to change (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993). However, the corporate desire for economic gain and/or the granting of primacy to the external market apparent in many organisations (e.g. – Mangold & Miles, 2007) may result in internal stakeholders becoming a bridge between boardroom and customer, or a conduit of organisational values, potentially alienating them if they perceive their needs deprioritised. IM may be mishandled accidentally, its execution undermining those whom it should serve (Vasconcelos, 2008), or deliberately abused to achieve a different aim from that stated.

This case study explores unexpected themes emerging from one semi-structured phenomenological interview - with Roger, a regional civil servant dealing with IM during organisational flux and rationalisation. First, Internal Demarketing (ID) – almost unrecognised within theory – is analysed, with its influence on staff, and their reactions. The study concludes by analysing how these findings help critically reappraise IM and guide practitioners and primary stakeholders, proposing four categories of ID – Unintentional ID, Ostensible IM, Selective IM and Selective ID.

8.2) Case study context and summary of the findings

This case study demonstrates that many primary stakeholders previously underrepresented in IM literature experience IM in ways not reported by academics or intended by practitioners. It explores consequences, not just for the organisation, but for stakeholders. The findings exist within the context of organisational flux or 'drift', cyclical strategic initiatives, the organisational pursuance of objectives which are not necessarily benign to all stakeholders, and the tacit, informal understanding and transmission of organisational knowledge at multi-hierarchical levels – therefore, constituting a postmodernist interpretation (Hearn & Parkin, 1993).

The participant harboured resentment of IM messages which he perceived as inauthentic, disingenuous or contradictory to his working realities, and of privileged superiors whom he considered unqualified to understand such realities empathetically. Whilst there is somewhat surprising evidence of disenchanted primary stakeholders sympathising with middle manager intermediaries of negative IM, it seems they are likely to close ranks defensively against such initiatives, even engaging in passive resistance to them. Several participants in the broader interview process reported feeling disappointed, alienated, and undervalued by aspects of IM, rendering the IM counterproductive, and seemingly generating negative net equity to the organisation.

Rather than exploring the emerging themes in isolation, this chapter focuses on their interconnectedness. By focusing predominantly on negative elements of IM and their consequences, this section differs from the analysis of the interviews and focus group, although comments from this participant have informed those discussions.

As it is difficult to ascertain organisational intent to undertake ID, the following section provides a broad industry context detailing the political desire to change the ethos, values

and working practices of the UK Civil Service whilst reducing its headcount economically. As may be seen, there are numerous conflicting comments from leading political actors which suggest a wish to make the Civil Service more attractive to certain employees than to others – which corresponds with the segmented and ostensible IM described by Roger.

8.2.1) The broader context: the UK Civil Service since 2010, and Roger's place within it

Of the UK's 32 million strong workforce, 17% are public sector workers, including 1.3% in the Civil Service – central government. Numbers of non-industrial civil servants fell from around 775,000 in 1977 to 475,000 in 1999, rising to a subsequent peak of 534,000 under Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer, and future Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, before he reduced the number to 481,000 FTE posts by the time of the 2010 UK General Election (Stanley, 2016). The resulting Conservative-Liberal Coalition administration stated an intent to reduce central government costs by a third as part of their austerity agenda (Haddon, 2012), and by late 2015 the number of civil servants had fallen to 384,000 (ONS, 2015), the lowest level since the Second World War (Freeguard, Andrews, Devine, Munro & Randall, 2015). Tory Chancellor George Osborne's Autumn Statement of that year announced incremental, widespread but unquantified reductions (Stanley, 2016). Although Labour governments have been broadly more tolerant of 'the state' than their Conservative counterparts, the cross-party consensus from around 1979 to 2015 has been that a 'big state' is politically undesirable, and that the public sector should be commercially accountable (Richards, Blunkett & Mathers, 2008).

Francis Maude, the Coalition government Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General (2010-15) arrived promising to cut costs by tackling what he viewed as complacency (Page, Pearson, Jurgit & Kidson, 2012), by introducing in 2011 the Government Digital Service to streamline the government-public interface through its gov.uk website, and by seeking wholesale efficiencies (Kidson, 2013). Whilst Dave Penman, General Secretary of the FDA union which represents senior civil servants,

praised Maude's engagement, willingness to listen, and commitment to produce a resilient civil service, the Public and Commercial Services union representing the rank-and-file criticised Maude's zeal in axing over 90,000 jobs to shrink the state, and the changes he brought to pensions, pay, employment terms and outsourcing practices (Rutter, 2015). Its disposition towards him was not improved by his reduction by 75% between 2011 and 2015 of taxpayer-funded union 'facility time' or, as he described it in October 2016, "automatic time off to attend seaside union conferences" (Hansard, 2016). In his 2015 constituency MP resignation letter, Maude declared pride in his legacy of saving the Exchequer over £14billion the previous year, and a desire for the reforms to be irreversible. He went on to detail how he had reduced the civil service by a fifth, vacated property 26 times the floor size of Buckingham Palace, cut a third of related quangos and halved government advertising spend (ibid.). Shortly before vacating his post, he called for all civil servants to be ranked individually on performance within their departments, opining that the bottom performing 10% of any organisation should be coached and supported to improvement and then, if unsuccessful, dismissed (Bowie, 2015). His successor, Matt Hancock, proposed an objective of appointing over 300,000 civil service apprentices by 2020, ostensibly to reflect the UK demographic. Whilst the Cabinet Office denied that existing roles would be phased out to achieve this, another Cabinet Office report stated that redundancy packages should be made less generous, partly to "*reduce current staff numbers due to both the spending review and the need to create space to allow for the recruitment of apprentices*" (Cabinet Office, 2016). Clearly, this comment belies a government intention previously denied.

To achieve the efficiencies, Maude and the 2012-14 Head of the Home Civil Service, Sir Bob Kerslake, sought changes to behaviour and culture within the civil service (Page et al, 2012; Kidson, 2013), and the deployment of staff and resources interdepartmentally (HM Government, 2013) – both of which may be considered key aims of IM. Moreover, the 2012-14 Cabinet Secretary, Sir Jeremy Heywood, wanted "departments to come together"

(Public Administration Select Committee, 2013), whilst Lord Browne, 2010-15 Lead Non-Executive Director of the Cabinet Office, noted the “*unproductive frictional costs [which] arise as one silo rubs up against another*” (Institute for Government, 2013). However, whilst they criticised the existing culture as sluggish, process-driven, change-resistant, bureaucratic and hierarchical, and expressed a wish to make it faster, more accountable, flexible and outcome-driven (HM Government, 2012), they considered change to be achievable almost solely through the explicit demarcation of their expectations of staff, with Maude saying, “*You don’t change the culture by trying to change the culture*” (Public Administration Select Committee, 2013).

As a result of reform, the UK civil service has changed markedly since 2010, and not only in terms of headcount. By introducing a redundancy payment ‘cap and floor’, policy appeared to level out privilege somewhat. However, this may have incentivised lower-paid staff, and disincentivised higher-paid ones, to accept redundancy offers, notwithstanding the distribution of such offers across pay grades. Certainly, by 2015, the average age of a UK civil servant was higher than five years previously, with 40% of staff being above 50, and under 30s experiencing the largest relative decline during the period. The workforce also became more concentrated amongst the senior grades as a result of junior roles experiencing the most swingeing cuts, with staff numbers declining significantly amongst AO/AA pay scales but actually growing at the four higher categories. Likewise, whilst the proportion of female civil servants grew from 34% in 2010 to 40% in 2015, this figure masks their overrepresentation in the lower grades and underrepresentation at higher ones (ibid.). Moreover, the increase in ethnic diversity failed to catch up with that of the UK population, the 15% reduction in headcount reduced salary spend by 18% despite being concentrated at lower grades - and was accompanied by a reduction in the amount of space per staff member, with ten departments enjoying less than one workstation per employee – and staff numbers in London grew at the expense of the regions (ibid.). Indeed, the Sheffield office of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills – the

department tasked with championing Chancellor Osborne's "Northern Powerhouse" – was subsequently earmarked for relocation to London in a decision labelled by Jillian Thomas, President of Sheffield's Chamber of Commerce, as "*symbolically contradictory*" (SCCI, 2016). These outcomes seem rather inconsistent with a spirit of renewal, regeneration, and commensurateness with the national demographic, and often the positive headlines and seemingly noble intentions appear upon closer scrutiny bedevilled by the detail. Against such a backdrop, it is reasonable to expect that any IM initiative within the civil service during this period may not have delivered its publicly stated objectives or adhered to accepted IM principles.

Roger, at the time of interview in 2014, was a middle-aged civil servant with over 25 years' continuous service in one regional office of a national government department. Since 2006, he had been responsible for a small team of people, and his salary was approximately £38k. After the 2010 UK General Election, his department had been subjected to extensive restructuring and rationalisation, and many of his colleagues had accepted voluntary severance packages. Roger chose to decline such an offer in 2012 as he valued the stability and familiarity of continuing his service and - despite being offered a substantial sum of money which could have paid off his mortgage and compensated him for several years' alternative work at a reduced wage - because he felt his employment options outside the civil service to be very restricted, especially within his adopted home region. Despite a long and previously unblemished record, Roger began to endure ongoing criticism from his superiors, and was placed into performance management measures for supposed failure to meet subjective criteria, and ranked in the bottom, 'underperforming' category of staff in repeated annual reviews. He reports that, since 2010, staff had been targeted by a continuous and concerted IM campaign attempting to communicate organisational benefits to staff and to orient them towards a redesigned suite of desirable attributes. This has been undertaken within a landscape of pay and recruitment freezes, decreased pension entitlements, reduced government investment,

regional office closures and relocations, worsening staff morale and widespread retrenchment.

8.3) The major theme – Internal Demarketing

Expanding upon Kotler & Levy's (1971) pioneering article conceptualising demarketing, Bradley & Blythe (2014) suggested that it falls into six categories: (i) synchromarketing, which seeks synchronicity between peaks and troughs in supply and demand; (ii) counter-marketing, to counteract pressures to buy or consume products (like alcohol or tobacco); (iii) general demarketing, reducing overall demand for services or products; (iv) selective demarketing, discouraging demand from certain customer segments; (v) ostensible demarketing, where organisations create the impression of trying to reduce demand whilst covertly trying to increase it; and (vi) unintentional demarketing, when marketing goes wrong and inadvertently decreases, rather than increases, demand. In introducing ID, Vasconcelos (2011, p.37) thought it outside the scope of IM, indicating a lack of IM ethos, or the bipolar opposite of IM. More precisely,

“the set of managerial actions, decisions, and behaviors – either consciously or unconsciously implemented – that are capable of triggering perceptions of frustration, disappointment and dissatisfaction at work settings and that can potentially lead to the decrease of employee productivity and organizational performance...[the] result of an organizational dysfunction and/or a sort of corporate illness that may engender employee dissatisfaction, distrust, and lack of commitment.”

This case study helps redefine the scope of ID and ascertain if it may exist within an IM campaign, and the extent to which those ‘actions, decisions and behaviors’ may be consciously implemented, but with consequences which are deliberate. One must note that Vasconcelos (2011) believed ID actions could sometimes be conscious, but nowhere does he imply that negative consequences of those conscious actions may be intentional.

Vasconcelos (2011) also considered the antecedents of ID to be psychological contract violation, ‘people devaluing’, ‘quality of working life unconcern’, poor leadership, blurred vision, growing distrust, and lack of communication. This case study discusses the extent

to which these are antecedents or consequences, and the presence of other contributory factors.

8.4) The case study participant – Roger

Roger is a middle-aged, regional civil servant with over 25 years' experience, the final decade overseeing a small team of staff. After the 2010 General Election, many of his colleagues accepted voluntary redundancy as the organisation restructured and rationalised. Roger stayed but, despite an unblemished record, subsequently endured repeated criticism and corrective measures for supposed under-performance against subjective criteria, and accepted a compromise agreement a year after the interview. Since 2010 there has been a concerted and conspicuous IM campaign to communicate staff benefits and orient the workforce towards amended attributes, against a backdrop of recruitment and pay freezes, decreased pension entitlements, reduced government investment, branch closures, worsening staff morale and widespread retrenchment.

8.5) Roger and his experiences of Internal Demarketing

Roger builds a fragmented picture of ID surfacing in the text through brief comments, invariably presenting itself alongside references to other phenomena such as spin and disingenuous IM, and particularly workplace alienation. This strongly suggests that ID is linked to other afflictions undermining ineffective IM.

IM promotes workplace inclusivity and the selling of jobs as products, but Roger comments that, within his site,

“most of us dislike working for the organisation because we don't feel that we're a big part of it. We are a satellite office that's pretty much on the periphery of things.”

Here, Roger uses his 'voice' to outline the dissent and feelings of alienation within his organisation. Whilst it is common for members of a social group to bond through shared negative perceptions of a rival group or by perceiving themselves as struggling against a

common enemy (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1961), Roger describes examples of how region-based employees are disadvantaged comparative to London-based counterparts due to the centralised organisational structure. Not only do region-based staff fail to

“get the same training and development, so [they] suffer a lot with diseconomies of scale”,

but

“there’s a clear role that [London is] at the centre of the action [because the industrial focus] takes place in London and we do a lot of what I’d call the dirty work – not work that’s high profile or particularly high importance.”

Empowerment and fairness are pivotal to IM (e.g. - Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003), and there are moral and legal obligations to treat staff equitably, but that appears not the case here - perhaps the appetite for operating regionally has lapsed or is superficial. Moreover, if opportunities for one workforce segment are disproportionately limited, then those workers may seek compensatory benefits outside the IM strategy, prioritising different job criteria. For example, Roger comments that

“in [the region] where I work, pay is a big thing, cos we don’t get promotions.”

The lack of career progression regionally means those workers perceive less opportunity for promotion, and may therefore strive less towards those desirable organisational values required to be evidenced by promotion candidates, which IM is intended to instil. It could also lead to ambitious, young staff gravitating towards London, leaving regional offices culturally impoverished, and this may be compounded by rationalisation and centralisation of resources. As Roger commented when building a narrative to explain the main actors and relationships within his organisation’s IM,

“since the restructuring, we feel that the smaller regional offices have been disproportionately affected. So whilst there is this phrase, “Everyone’s in this together”, we’ve been hit, and the reason we’ve been hit is because we’ve lost people in our organisation. We’re so small now that we can’t recruit people because they see it as high risk, and what happens now, you’re left with five or six of us who are all men, all over the age of 45. There’s no new, young people, there’s no refreshment of the organisation.”

Roger describes piecemeal this seemingly irreversible chain of events: regional offices receive less investment; the job products there become inferior, less attractive and marketed inappropriately; older staff retire or take redundancy; they cannot be replaced by young, ambitious staff who perceive regional offices as damaging to their careers; the regional workforce ages and loses career mobility, dwindles in number, and fails to embrace new IM initiatives; regional offices are threatened with closure; regional staff become more fearful and defensive; and the organisation becomes increasingly London-centric in its IM. In this vicious circle, ID and the marginalisation of regional jobs are reciprocal factors. Adapting Bradley & Blythe’s (2014) categories of demarketing, it is unclear whether this is a hybrid of selective ID, where the organisation is gradually and purposefully reducing demand for job products from the workforce segments deemed least desirable – here, region-based staff – or unintentional ID, where lack of empathy and forethought inadvertently produce poorly conceived IM which damages the regions. Likewise, it is debatable which negative effects constitute ID, and which are attributable to the organisation’s structural characteristics. This shadows the broader debate seeking delineation of the IM-HR boundary (e.g. – Rafiq & Ahmed, 1993; Hales, 1994).

Thus far, the focus has been on structurally influenced ID. However, Roger, analysing his organisation’s contextual values, also describes ID which has occurred through inconsistency:

“We are getting these value messages – ‘work smarter’, ‘work together’, ‘commit to other people’s success’. I mean, there lies a paradox – ‘committing to other people’s success’ – cos we’ve got an individual performance environment, so we’re in competition with each other, but there are quotas, y’know. Some people are ranked against other people and it’s the first time they’ve brought this in. And y’know, there’s this other value that we’ve got to commit to others’ success. So there is a paradox there – how do we commit to other

people's success when our pay and performance is dictated by getting an edge over someone?...they seem to contradict each other. We expect you to be competitive and get this edge, and get more pay as a result, but then we're expecting you to commit to other people's success. So they're trying to match the...old-fashioned...values of co-operation, teamwork, and with this new commercial angle or this mentality that we should all compete with each other, drive up our performance. They're trying to mix the old world and the new world together and...it's causing a lot of confusion really."

The organisation seems to encourage staff to work collaboratively, as before, but also adopt a private sector, competitive mentality by competing against colleagues. The resulting dissonance is not purely in the decoding of the message but, as the organisation grades staff against each other, is more entrenched - especially as workers ranked in the bottom 25 percent against subjective criteria automatically become 'people needing development' and enter a procedure ostensibly to improve their performance (against objective and subjective criteria including adherence to organisational values) but often leads to disciplinary hearings, demotions and dismissals. The simultaneous encouragement and rewarding of conflictingly collectivistic and individualistic working practices may be unintentional demarketing (Kotler & Levy, 1971; Bradley & Blythe, 2014) engendered by 'blurred vision' and 'poor leadership' (Vasconcelos, 2011), though 'lack of information' and a 'spread of distrust' appear as consequences rather than antecedents. Moreover, Sherif et al (1961) found that splitting people into social groups, assigning labels and pitting them against each other, creates disharmony. To restore harmony, situations must arise where groups collaborate for their mutual benefit. However, the organisation's policy appears ill-conceived and contradictory.

8.6) Roger and his experiences of 'Unintentional Internal Demarketing', 'Ostensible Internal Marketing', spin and disingenuous Internal Marketing

Above all else, it is advantageous for IM to engender genuine, rather than disingenuous, exchanges (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). The pejorative word spin entered common parlance in the past two decades and indicates a deliberate distortion of facts through reemphasis and recontextualisation to present a truth as it would not otherwise have been interpreted

by recipients (e.g. – Roberts, 2005). Although often describing ways in which politicians bend the truth to advantage themselves (usually to the detriment of the public), it may be applied to the internal market, where the organisation as communicator may possess similar power, privilege, motivation and will to distort or manipulate facts. Spin and disingenuous IM may be a sub-theme or contributory factor of ID – any content in IM which is untruthful, veiled or lacking in integrity or transparency. It may entail the design and communication of meanings concealing or moderating negative elements or exaggerating positive elements. This obfuscation may not be confined to messages, but colour other “actions, decisions and behaviors” (Vasconcelos, 2011, p.35) comprising an IM initiative.

Roger comments that, within his organisation, because

“they know they haven’t got much power on pay and remuneration...they can’t really offer promotions...they try to spin the job enjoyment. I mean, a classic was recently where our senior man came up and said, “Well, we might not be able to pay you any more, but we can certainly make the job enjoyable””.

Roger surmises that the organisation uses spin to compensate for a lack of freedom to satisfy staff remuneratively, although the manager’s comment may have been genuine. However, Roger continues to present examples of distortion by using his ‘voice’ to narrate his experiences of ID against the organisational landscape:

“They repackage things in a different way. They’re not really adding anything on. I mean, for instance, they’re saying they’re now offering five days’ training. Well, we’ve always had that, but they reoffer it as five days’ training...just by selling it in a different way. It’s marketing it in a way that makes everyone think it’s new, so the guy’ll come up, they’ll make some big corporate announcement that you’ve got five days’ training and we’re gonna guarantee it. Well, they always have guaranteed it, but because they’ve added that word ‘guarantee’, people think this is a new thing, and obviously it’s not.”

Here, Roger perceives the IM message as deceitful, seemingly correctly. Elsewhere he mentions how declining pension benefits are repackaged as improvements. Interestingly, he uses ‘market’, ‘selling’ and ‘repackage’ - though perhaps due to awareness of the

research scope - to emphasise the commercialism of the process. In doing so, he implies the approach is deliberate, predetermined, organisational and strategic, rather than tacit, accidental, individual or ad hoc – when he refers to ‘the guy’, this person is clearly an agent of the organisation who will ‘come up’ to regional office specifically to achieve a gain and return to base. Whilst recipients of marketing approaches detect superficial relational terminology sweetening an underlying profit motivation, driving “both organizations and consumers [to] sustain exchange in a state of suspended belief” (O’ Malley & Prothero, 2004, p.1292), there appears a tipping point of tolerance. Roger portrays an us and them mentality, perhaps inherent in any hub-and-spoke organisational structure, but fuelled by negative IM. This should be considered ID, at least in Roger’s context, as he becomes disillusioned and demotivated by it, but it is unclear whether it constitutes the unintentional demarketing which inadvertently results in decreased staff demand (Bradley & Blythe, 2014). It may perhaps be considered the opposite of Bradley & Blythe’s (2014) ostensible demarketing – that is, ostensible IM, in which the organisation creates the impression of trying to increase demand amongst its workforce whilst covertly trying to decrease it.

It appears that staff become fatigued by spin, with Roger narrating the relationships and his colleagues’ reactions to IM, commenting that

“The organisation uses a lot of spin. Every day we have an intranet message about how wonderful it would be to work there and all this type of thing, and a lot of people are now getting a bit tired of it. We’ve had it so much now that we think it’s a bit of a secret distraction.”

It also seems that staff dislike messages from managers whom they perceive as over-privileged and unqualified to empathise – a phenomenon also surfacing during an interview with Jessie, an academic, in chapter 7. Roger says

“generally these are people who are also in the organisation who are very well remunerated themselves, and for them to talk to people as though just job enjoyment is the whole sense of being there is very difficult for us to palate.”

Moreover, attempts by managers to exude positivity can be counterproductive, with Roger observing that, as they try

“a little bit harder with a charm offensive...we end up getting more cynical and bitter about it.”

The description of IM as ‘charm offensive’ carries connotations of superficiality and perhaps a strategy constituting an attack and a limited timeframe – characteristics incongruous with good IM practice. Roger continues, explaining the

“element of charm offensive – I used that term before – sort of, “you’re very valued, you’re very important”. The difficulty comes when the words are not backed up by the actions.”

For example,

“We have never had a visit from...our top boss...so we started to doubt whether they actually did mean this [whereas] on the intranet...he would talk about his weekend and how important it was to have a work-family life...and he’d do some personal homilies and make it sound like he was a guy who anyone could come and talk to if we met him in the street.”

Roger prefers IM messages, and particularly the handling of negative news, when presented by someone empathetic with ordinary staff members and personalising the experience. However, when attempted without the organisation allocating sufficient resources (i.e. – trying to do it with inadequate manager-to-staff contact), the attempt is counterproductive and damaging, increasing staff perceptions of spin. Even minor linguistic details can have undesired effects, as Roger explains whilst examining managerial behaviours:

“senior managers use the word “we’re buzzing about this”, so you get a lot of marketing where there’s a little event in the foyer now, in the building, and they’ll say, “we’re buzzing about this exhibition in the morning”, and...people do get very cynical about it. And I think it’s wearing off now. I think staff are getting very sort of naffed off about it...what you don’t do is try to go out of your way to...try to fit in and be cool, cos then you’re becoming insincere...There’s nothing alienates people more than trying to create an overly positive picture when they may not be feeling very positive. Now I know the senior managers have got to try and keep this upbeat thing, but at times I think they need to just calm the spin

down a bit, just tone it down a bit...Just accept that times are hard and almost try and do it in a sincere way. I think there's a lot of that – there's too much spin now – and it begins to alienate people after a while. It starts to sound a bit hollow."

Conveying disproportionate optimism, especially repetitively over long periods through unnatural language, fatigues staff and undermines IM credibility, although there appears some staff understanding and acceptance of its rationale, and some sympathy toward intermediaries. Indeed, the above quote indicates that staff may expect some spin, but the tolerance threshold may be breached as organisations try to manage bad news – perhaps the very time when staff tolerance is lowest.

8.7) Roger and his experiences of 'Selective Internal Demarketing'

This section outlines the proposed concept of Selective ID, in which the organisation uses messages, actions and behaviours reasonably assumed deliberate or knowingly unattractive to specific internal market segments deemed undesirable, to alienate and reduce demand from them for the organisation's job products.

Whilst IM practitioners should treat stakeholders equitably, ensuring consistency of message, action and behaviour (Yang & Coates, 2010), there may be instances when diverse stakeholder needs within the internal market are best served by segmenting the workforce and targeting approaches at each segment. This may achieve the same effect as when the external market is segmented. Such approaches invariably have positive connotations and are accepted, ethical practice. However, selective demarketing (Kotler & Levy, 1971; Farquhar, 2014; Tan, 2014; Bradley & Blythe, 2014) occurs where organisations act to reduce demand from certain customer types whilst retaining, and possibly increasing, demand from others. Selective demarketing may be considered distinct from segmenting and targeting desirable customers with attractive propositions – rather it segments and targets undesirable customers with unattractive propositions. It therefore carries negative connotations and is ethically ambiguous, although as

demarketing in general has matured, authors increasingly focus on its ethically legitimate aims (e.g. – Mark & Brennan, 1995; Wright & Egan, 2000).

Selective ID may also be considered distinct from the emerging concept of Cryptic Marketing (Choong & Drennan, 2015), which conveys meaning attractive to, and understood by, a specific minority audience to boost niche appeal, but neither understood by, nor attractive to, the existing majority customer audience which could be alienated by this meaning (e.g. – Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2005; Oakenfull, McCarthy & Greenlee, 2008) – a strategy to increase demand in one small segment and defend against a consequent decrease in demand in a larger segment, rather than actively seeking reductions in demand anywhere. This proposed concept of Selective ID, arising from Roger's interview, applies selective demarketing principles (Kotler & Levy, 1971; Bradley & Blythe, 2014) to the internal market – a phenomenon barely developed within Vasconcelos' (2011) conceptualisation of ID. It therefore contributes theoretically to ID, demarketing and IM.

Roger described how his organisation's messages and managerial behaviours, and the policies underpinning them appear targeted at fast trackers – young graduate entrants on accelerated promotion schemes – and *against* long-serving regional staff members such as himself:

“the people doing these soundbites are unwittingly appealing to their own kind. So people who are on fast-track development programmes, accelerated learning programmes, will quite enjoy this self-actualisation message, that they're gonna be doing a job and they're gonna be really empowered, and they're not gonna be restricted by poor staff, and that it's gonna be slimmer, fitter, leaner. It's gonna be more competitive and we're really gonna show you what we can do. But the people on the bottom line doing the monkey-grinding jobs are not gonna...this is not gonna appeal to them at all. This is gonna have absolutely no value to them at all...It's just their small inner circle.”

The word 'unwittingly' here suggests that Roger believes the organisation to be segmenting the internal market inadvertently, sending messages which only appeal to some members of staff, although his opinion hardens elsewhere. He also implies that fast

trackers are competitive or ruthless, and that this may be exploited through messages appealing to their self-importance, vanity or comparatively higher desire for self-actualisation and lower desire for stability, and increased willingness to defer remunerative gains.

Roger also describes how certain employee segments can access IM benefits due to the buy-in of their supervisors or culture of their offices. Here he talks about a recognition scheme:

“One of the biggest problems with the rewards is...it is nominated by people within the organisation, so there is an expectation your managers will go out of their way to nominate colleagues or teams for an award, and what you find in any organisation is that some people are more willing to do that than others...we’re all pretty blue collar [regional] people, so...there is a sort of view that you just get on with your job – you just do it and you don’t look to showboat or anything. That means that your managers are less likely to want to go out of their way to reward, and there is some equality issues with rewards. There is a feeling that most of these awards go to people in London, who have got that sort of inner self-confidence to nominate their colleagues for these things, um, so there is some bad feeling about these rewards, that they don’t go to the people on the margins – which is a difficulty.”

Perhaps there could be us and them jealousy or a misperception of Londoners’ workplace characteristics in Roger’s comments. However, even if unfounded, the IM is ineffective in managing those perceptions and motivating all staff, and it seems the organisation has failed to design out effects of self-publicity or mitigate the disadvantages of toiling modestly for an unappreciative boss.

About training, Roger perceives over-allocation of privilege to fast trackers, rather than to London-based staff (although there is a significant intersection of the two). His ‘voice’ becomes particularly strong here, as he conveys his emotions:

“I get really annoyed, because a lot of the training and development is invested in these people, and one of the things when [an outsourced agency] did a survey of [the organisation], an unofficial survey, and that was one of the big things that came out is that they have concentrated so much on these young leaders, because what they want is a much slimlined [organisation]. They want to get rid of a lot of the middle grades, and they want these sort of dynamic managers to run things. And a lot of the training’s been

invested in them to the exclusion of everybody else...It's very much biased towards fast-track people."

At a more localised, personal level, but perhaps no less institutionally, lack of consideration towards regional staff undermines IM, alienates staff and creates resentment. Roger voices his emotions once more, describing an 'us and them' relationship:

"the ones from head office – the cascading emails, as we call them – will generally appreciate other people's needs and requirements. So for example, they may say, "We're holding a sort of staff day. Turn up at London at 9 o'clock. Be there. Come and enjoy it." At which point, people in my office with kids and families are saying, "Well, I can't get there for that time"."

Perhaps more damaging is the organisational extolling of values and practices which are less attainable for certain staff segments due to personal circumstances. Roger's organisation proposed

"this idea that people should move their jobs every six months...something that everyone should do, so that they can get experience of different jobs and different things...They've moved it to a year now...I think it should really be directed at those people who really want to progress up the ladder...[because many of the staff in regional offices] have done the same job...they've developed this expertise, they have their history, and they enjoy that, and that's what makes their job attractive – they can apply this almost historical knowledge."

Not only do many regional based staff find regular relocation unattractive, but if they have strong ties to an area (e.g. - offspring at school or dependent relatives), there are insurmountable barriers not considered by the organisation to participation in those IM initiatives. Whilst it is understandable for organisations to expect mobility and flexibility from those seeking advancement, this IM message is divisive and alienating, and managed clumsily - perhaps not because regional-based staff have been denied opportunities, but that

"there becomes this accusation that if you don't do it, you're somehow unambitious and you don't wanna get on",

stigmatising an employee segment by negative implication. By presenting a benefit to one segment which can participate, the organisation is, by default, presenting a grievance to another segment which cannot.

8.8) Roger and his feelings of alienation arising from 'Unintentional Internal Demarketing', 'Ostensible Internal Marketing' and 'Selective Internal Demarketing'

Having explored how an organisation may use (or misuse) IM techniques, decreasing demand for job products amongst specific employee segments, this section explores the effects of these approaches upon Roger, considering consequences for the employee, the broader workforce and the organisation.

Alienation may be seen in several contexts. Marxian descriptions of alienation conceptualise it stemming from industrialisation and capitalism, estranging employees from their work, its end product, their colleagues and their true identity (Padgett, 2007) – factors which IM initiatives seek to address (Grönroos, 1981; Berry, 1984). It may also arise from feelings of powerlessness due to an inability to do as one wishes in the workplace (Kalekin-Fishman, 1996), of meaninglessness due to an inability to understand events in which one participates (Seeman, 1959), and normlessness due to the accepted rules of individual conduct within society breaking down through complexity and conflict (Neal & Collas, 2000). In workplace and non-workplace contexts, alienation may also occur where one individual or group feels disadvantaged, separated or isolated (e.g. – Kalekin-Fishman, 1996).

Roger consistently describes how the organisation's actions divide the workforce, leaving some employees feeling neglected, negatively targeted, undervalued or unwanted. When

discussing the well-publicised, flagship development plan which his organisation has for its staff, he notes ruefully that

“they’ve also changed the performance system, now that ten percent used to be ...what you would call ‘poor performers’, although they don’t like to call it that. They just call it ‘people needing development’. Now they’ve expanded that to 25 percent, so there’s a bigger core now...This has created a lot of dissatisfaction...so people who would have routinely been in the average middle category are now being put into this 25 percent category. And the deal is that there’s...the way they’ve presented it, which irritates a lot of people, is that “don’t see yourselves as being poor performers – just see yourself as needing more development than other people”. The problem is, they’re not offering that development. Cos these poor performers are not likely to be fast-trackers. They’re more likely to be other types of people. So they’re saying there’s...”oh, you just need more development”, but if you’re gonna place these people in this lower quartile, you’ve gotta offer development. There’s no point saying...cos otherwise people will just deem it as “ah, I’m just much worse than everybody else and...”, so it’s created a lot of dissatisfaction, this. Even the surveys that they’re doing have shown that people are really dissatisfied with this 25 percent category”.

The staff performance facet of this organisation’s IM strategy is poorly perceived by most staff. The main causes of discontent, which Roger considers widespread, seem as follows: staff feel publicly stigmatised by being identified in the bottom quartile; the non-appearance of promised development training triggers cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), making staff suspicious that their negative identification is not for developmental purposes but a less positive agenda; the unfairness of an arbitrary ranking system in which a quarter of the workforce will default to ‘needing development’ regardless of their strengths. Interestingly, Roger does not mention broader effects on staff morale here. However, he comments, albeit briefly, on the impact of this alienation on employees’ personal happiness, and the lack of understanding of this by managers:

“you’re in the bottom 25 percent, so you’re looking upwards and those people in the 25 percent are feeling not very good, but the manager’s trying to put this spin on it as if it’s almost this parallel universe, and that these people aren’t going to feel all that bothered because all they need is more development”.

Roger’s comment that managers fail to recognise employees’ unhappiness may be conjecture, but it indicates staff perceptions of their superiors arising from poor IM. Alternatively, managers’ genuine attempts at reassurance are possibly misinterpreted by

staff. He also describes organisational relationships, and how staff alienation has increased through fragmentation of the workplace – particularly the geographical dispersion of colleagues:

“generally, you try to keep a bit of office banter going. You try and...even if they're not people working on your team, you try to get to know them and have a chat with them. But it has got very fragmented with cross-site working now, with different people working for different teams. You don't have that same team binding now. When you worked for the same team you had that sort of collective purpose [but when you] are all on different teams and you don't actually work for each other – and I think at work, if you haven't got that common denominator at work – it's very difficult to get that bond between people...[it] goes against this mobile labour philosophy that they want to...not...not mobile labour – this sort of 'anyone can work anywhere for the organisation'”.

Whilst a key IM objective is to dismantle silos, encouraging interdepartmental cooperation and communication (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991), Roger suggests this may have drawbacks, be unrealistic or – in terms of staff morale and intraorganisational communication – largely destructive. Perhaps this theoretical blindspot stems from the neglect in IM literature of tacit organisational knowledge central to postmodern organisational theory (Hearn & Parkin, 1993), and the relative paucity of bottom-up perspectives. Alternatively, this may not be a well-intentioned but ineffective attempt at staff alignment (i.e. – Unintentional ID), but a deliberate attempt to appear well-intentioned to staff whilst purposely undermining job satisfaction, reducing their demand for job products (i.e. – Ostensible IM). If so, and the organisation is using messages and offerings which deliberately and simultaneously please one segment of the workforce whilst displeasing another, it may be (i) Ostensible IM against that segment; and (ii) 'Selective ID' favourable to the desired segment. Such approaches may be facilitated by members of the undesired segment being dispersed and therefore unable to offer united resistance.

Roger also voices a narrative to describe how he perceives his presence in certain meetings as being token:

“There have been meetings where I think they’ve just forgotten I’m there. And they’ve said at the end, “Anything from [your region] that you’d like to say?”, and by that time the whole thing’s gone. So when you get people in the group, like our London office, where there’s a lot of people, they generally talk with each other, and when you’ve got one person, you’re just sort of marginalised from it...It just reinforced that sort of inner sense of alienation really. The feeling that you’re on the periphery and you’re located...all the actions and the opportunities are all located in a particular area and you just feel that you’re just a spare part...it does...it reinforces alienation a little bit”.

Here, unassertiveness, and the tendency of people to forget those who are out of sight, may be factors. Also, people often associate with others who share their space – not necessarily people linked by attitudes, but by activities (Milgram, 1967). Therefore, the alienating effect of distance here may be viewed as Unintentional ID - botched IM - or Ostensible IM. It is worsened through insensitivity towards regional based workers:

“I think where I work in the sort of backwater office, the desire is just to have a job and to do as well as you can with it, and not to do a lot of this moving around type of thing. And people don’t want to do that. But there sort of...there becomes this accusation that if you don’t do it, you’re somehow unambitious and you don’t wanna get on...It’s more about security and stability, particularly if you’ve got a young family, and you’re a working mother...the way they phrase things, so if you...”we like people to move around, to get some personal experience”, so by definition, if you don’t do that...it’s inferred...It’s not said explicitly, it’s said implicitly”.

Therefore, IM may damage those unable to embrace its initiatives due to personal circumstances, and it may not only be refuseniks left behind and stigmatised. An unscrupulous organisation could bring this phenomenon into play purposefully.

Roger, moving from the voice of ‘I’ to the voice of ‘we’, detailed the effects of alienation upon him, and those within his social group at work:

“we’ve got more protective...trying to make sure that we present our team as relevant because as you lose numbers, you feel as though you’re getting more irrelevant...even if there are some things that can go wrong on site, we try and hide it so that London don’t get wind of it and use it as another excuse. There’s always this deep paranoia that London eventually are out to try to close us down. And that’s because of the experiences we’ve had, so there’s a certain ‘them against us’ really, and I think this kind of negatively actually binds people together really”.

Paradoxically, although this alienation produced an outcome undesirable to internal marketers – some workers closing ranks and disengaging from interdepartmental or multi-hierarchical open communication - a siege mentality may foster local camaraderie, albeit targeted against the organisation. If fear accompanies alienation, as here, the organisation and managers are unlikely to receive the feedback required to make improvements:

“lack of opportunities, lack of training and development. We’re also very careful not to shout this out too much, that it gives senior managers an excuse to shut us down and say, “Well, your staff there are saying that there’s no...we can’t develop an HR strategy there, so we’ll have to shut them down”.

Perhaps significantly, where Roger discusses coercive forces, he refers to an HR strategy, rather than a marketing one – reinforcing the boundaries proposed by Rafiq & Ahmed (1993).

8.9) The theme of Internal Demarketing

The concept of ID (Vasconcelos, 2011) is recent and niche, barely informing broader IM theory. The initial reading and analysis of IM literature suggested ID would be outside the research scope, or extremely peripheral. However, several participants (particularly Roger) voluntarily described closely interlinked phenomena constituting ID, providing insights significantly developing Vasconcelos’ (2008; 2011) theory, especially when viewed against the broader demarketing theory critically appraised recently (e.g. – Bradley & Blythe, 2014). Contrary to expectations at research commencement, ID is perceived by numerous internal stakeholders as important, conspicuous, commonplace and damaging. This prompted a specific case study into ID.

The theme of ID presents itself repeatedly. Roger complains that many of his organisation’s IM initiatives and messages are inappropriate, divisive, demoralising, insensitive and unrealistic. There is uncertainty over whether this is deliberate, accidental, or due to the organisation and management not caring about or understanding certain

employee segments. Roger believes it may result from institutionalised, London-centric attitudes within a privileged elite which cannot empathise with or properly appreciate region-based staff. However, Roger implies this tentatively – he is charitable, staying as positive as possible under siege. The wider organisational context which he provides – rationalisation, centralisation, redundancies and shifting organisational emphasis away from time-served junior managers and towards young fast-trackers – raises the possibility of deliberate ID.

For example, he comments that recently, he and colleagues perceived that

“we don’t feel that we’re a big part of it...and we do a lot of what I’d call the dirty work”.

The fact that, in regional offices,

“there’s no refreshment of the organisation”

suggests the organisation’s priorities lie elsewhere. Even initiatives targeting the entire organisation invoke cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) through their contradictions,

“trying to mix the old world and the new world together...causing a lot of confusion really”.

ID may be considered a supra-construct or umbrella theme, the simpler, constituent parts of which are discussed at length by Roger and summarised next.

8.10) The theme of 'Unintentional Internal Demarketing' and 'Ostensible Internal Marketing'

Whilst IM strategies often legitimately include transmission of positive organisational messages creating a feel-good factor, doing so inappropriately may be perceived negatively as spin. Moreover, if the organisation broadcasts messages not perceived by staff as truthful or sincere, such communications are more damaging to goodwill and inclusivity than an absence of messages, producing staff resentment and erosion of trust. It is possible that an organisation may engage in Ostensible IM, as may happen here. A proposed new concept, this applies to IM the concept of Ostensible Marketing (Bradley and Blythe, 2014; Croft, 2014; McKechnie, 2014) in which an organisation gives the impression of trying to increase demand whilst actually trying to reduce it.

Examples of spin and disingenuous messages include when the organisation says that

“they’re now offering five days’ training [when] we’ve always had that, but they reoffer it as five days’ training...just by selling it in a different way [and saying] “we’re gonna guarantee it””,

or by daily transmission of

“an intranet message about how wonderful it would be to work there”.

Roger comments that because of this

“charm offensive...we end up getting more cynical and bitter”,

especially

“when the words are not backed up by the actions...trying to create an overly positive picture when [staff] may not be feeling very positive”

and trying to humanise senior managers by using

“some personal homilies...begins to alienate people after a while. It starts to sound a bit hollow”.

There is a danger of organisations following IM procedures with a tick-box mentality, when the initiatives and messages should be dictated by the needs, circumstances and contexts in which the organisation and staff exist. Doing otherwise risks credibility and authenticity through a bespoke approach. Therefore, a full internal audit of the organisation may be desirable within the IM planning process. Moreover, managers’ success should not be measured by the extent to which they evangelise to staff. However, if it is an organisational or managerial objective to appear (at least to one segment of the workforce) to be using IM whilst deliberately doing it so inappropriately that it reduces demand, then this is Ostensible IM.

8.11) The theme of ‘Selective Internal Demarketing’

Whereas selective demarketing (Bradley & Blythe, 2014; Farquhar, 2014; Tan, 2014) is the deliberate reduction of demand through application of marketing techniques to a specific segment of the external market, Selective ID – proposed here as a new concept – targets this approach at employee segments. An organisation may pursue this approach if one segment is less desirable, to lower retention of unwanted employees – possibly expelling such staff members without recourse to redundancy payments. It may be considered a cynical, unethical and pernicious approach used secretly and difficult to identify. Organisations could undertake what may be termed Selective IM where they target a favoured employee segment for a positive campaign. However, those segments not targeted may (if they realised) feel disadvantaged, undervalued and marginalised, so the approach could be considered by default simultaneously Selective IM and Selective ID.

During the interview, Roger describes how many of his organisation's

"soundbites are unwittingly appealing to their own kind...people who are on fast-track development programmes, accelerated learning programmes",

whereas for

"the people on the bottom line doing the monkey-grinding jobs...this is not gonna appeal to them at all".

In producing policies or messages appealing to

"just their small inner circle"

(i.e. – 'selective IM') and competitions where regional staff perceive that

"most of these awards go to people in London, who have got that sort of inner self-confidence to nominate their colleagues for these things"

(i.e. – perceived 'selective IM'),

IM can generate feelings of isolation and otherness where some see themselves becoming

"people on the margins".

This is true when resources like training are

"invested in them to the exclusion of everybody else...biased towards fast-track people".

It is more important when there are structural barriers to some employees participating in IM initiatives – such as staff meetings held in London at short notice – and the organisation not only fails to recognise and mitigate those issues, but

“there becomes this accusation that if you don’t do it, you’re somehow unambitious and you don’t wanna get on”.

In this respect, unintentional demarketing (Bradley & Blythe, 2014; Kirchner, 2014; Madichie, 2014) occurring within the organisation as unintentional ID, including the accidentally deleterious side effects of selective IM, may be more damaging in some respects than deliberate selective ID, as the organisation and its managers misunderstand its effects and overlook the staff alienation discussed next.

8.12) The theme of alienation arising from Unintentional Internal Demarketing, Ostensible Internal Marketing and Selective Internal Demarketing

Alienation can entail an employee feeling powerless, experiencing meaninglessness, or estrangement from their work, their true selves or their colleagues. IM should empower employees (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003), enabling them to construct meaning through interdepartmental interactions (Keller et al, 2006), boosting appreciation of colleagues, self-worth and perceived value of their job products (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). Therefore, when IM produces results contradicting these objectives – unintentionally or otherwise – the reasons should be explored and mitigating strategies suggested.

Roger describes how the performance and training initiative – where a quarter of the workforce is deemed to be

“people needing development”

– has demoralised staff and made them think

“I’m just worse than everybody else”.

Those employees recognising the arbitrary nature of using a predetermined percentage are perhaps more likely not to let it erode their self-confidence, but may become alienated from an organisation which they can see as unfair. Roger says of those ‘needing development’ that

“you’re in the bottom 25 percent, so you’re looking upwards and...feeling not very good”.

The hierarchical notion of ‘looking up’ – at targets or colleagues – is particularly meaningful. It suggests that those affected feel inferior, unworthy, and perhaps stigmatised, undermining their self-concept as professionals.

Roger continues by saying that, because those unable to participate fully in IM initiatives suffer the implicit accusation that

“if you don’t do it, you’re somehow unambitious”,

and as

“there’s always this deep paranoia that London eventually are out to try to close us down”

(which is perhaps not paranoia at all),

“we’ve got more protective...because...you feel as though you’re getting more irrelevant...so there’s a certain ‘them against us’ mentality”.

It seems that the organisation's IM initiatives have not helped Roger to foster interdepartmental links, attach greater value to his work or embrace the (rather conflicting) values of his employer. On the contrary, the alienation generated has created an estrangement of the employer-employee relationship.

8.13) General discussion of themes and proposed taxonomy of Internal Demarketing.

Roger's case illustrates that IM initiatives do not necessarily bring positive results for the employee or organisation. If IM is genuinely undertaken for reasons wholly beneficial to the employee, as suggested within extant theory, safeguards must be used to ensure that poorly designed or executed IM strategies are detected, corrected and their effects mitigated. This may be achieved through internal audits using specific IM metrics to gauge their success throughout the strategy, and particularly at those pinch points where defects and dissatisfaction may occur. Designing audits and metrics would be a worthwhile focus for further research.

To guard against careless, ill-conceived, contradictory IM, organisations could include decision-making representation for employees. For example, if a staff representative had been consulted about Roger's organisation targeting employees against conflicting individual and group objectives, drawing upon the additional perspective of the IM 'target' may have alerted the organisation to a potentially counterproductive or damaging aspect of the initiative. However, if we assume that some organisations deliberately produce IM aimed at disengaging and pushing away staff segments, it is pertinent to understand why this might happen, what forms it might take, and what effects it might have on the employee and organisation (and, consequently, its external customers).

The findings from this case study challenge implications from the extant literature that IM is inherently positive, and introduces the possibility of deliberately harmful IM. Moreover, it explores different types of harmful IM, discussing their characteristics and interrelationships. Analysis has led to the proposal of several new concepts produced by hybridising Vasconcelos' (2008; 2011) emerging concept of ID with other sub-theories (e.g. – Croft, 2014; Farquhar, 2014; Kirchner, 2014) existing under the supra-construct of Demarketing (Kotler & Levy, 1971; Bradley & Blythe, 2014): (i) Unintentional ID; (ii) 'Ostensible IM'; (iii) 'Selective IM'; and (iv) Selective ID.

These proposed concepts may be summarised as per Table 7 below.

<u>Internal Demarketing</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
Unintentional ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • result of organisation's inabilities or lack of knowledge; • accidental, and contrary to wishes of organisation; • likely to affect negatively all internal stakeholders.
Ostensible IM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires significant organisational knowledge of internal market and ability to design and implement the strategy; • deliberate, and as per wishes of organisation; • may affect negatively some or all internal stakeholders.
Selective IM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires significant organisational knowledge of a desired segment of the internal market, but perhaps a lower awareness of the needs of a less desired segment of the internal market; • deliberate, unintentional or deliberate with unintended side-effects; • should positively affect those targeted employees, but may unintentionally and negatively affect those untargeted employees, unintentionally or perhaps intentionally.
Selective ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires significant organisational knowledge of internal market and ability to design and implement the strategy; • deliberate, and as per wishes of organisation; • should affect negatively some internal stakeholders, and either not affect or positively affect others.

Table 7: A proposed taxonomy of Internal Demarketing.

Some instances may occur in which several ID approaches occur. ID undermines the internal stakeholder at whom it is targeted, their perceptions of the organisation, their satisfaction, and possibly their self-esteem and relationships with others.

8.14) Summary of Chapter 8

This case study complemented findings from other semi-structured phenomenological interviews and the focus group explored in chapters 7 and 9 respectively, scrutinising experiences of one participant. Whilst in those chapters, a multi-stakeholder account of IM is explored, and the applicability of dyadic perspectives from CM literature into IM considered, here the unanticipated theme of ID has dominated a participant's experiences, leading to the proposal of different sub-categories of ID which appear of considerable consequence to organisations, stakeholders and theorists alike.

The following chapter analyses findings from the focus group, in which the applicability and transferability of concepts from CM theory to IM are explored.

Chapter 9) Findings from the focus group: from Channel Management to Internal Marketing.

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A key research objective was to explore how CM theory may be applied within an IM context, informing practice and expanding academic understanding of IM. This necessitated a more structured, less open-ended data collection technique than that used to produce the new perspectives explored in individual participant interviews. Therefore, a focus group of five participants was employed, to keep each data collection strategy separate and preserve the integrity of each objective. The focus group analysis is provided in this chapter. The participants, selected for their complementary experiences of IM, were as follows:

Participant	Experience and Context
Joanne	<p>Communications Manager for a national charity (approx. 80 employees); Former Communications Manager for a Regional Development Agency (approx. 300 employees).</p> <p>Joanne considered herself a people-oriented manager who values respect and honesty most highly in organisations.</p> <p>She understood IM to be a collection of progressive strategies to bring employees together with each other and the organisation.</p> <p>Her experiences of IM throughout her career had been positive and she declared herself a supporter and instigator of IM.</p>
William	<p>Commercial Director of a waste management company (approx. 200 employees); Former Sales & Marketing Director of a smaller waste management company.</p> <p>Whilst sympathetic to IM's aims, William was more sceptical about aspects which he considered 'touchy-feely' or 'taking things a bit too far'.</p> <p>He suggested that IM may be less of a focus in macho, or male-oriented industries, such as the one where he works, and in smaller SMEs.</p> <p>His understanding of IM centred on encouraging employees to embrace brand values and to 'get with the programme', although he also appreciated, to a lesser extent, the personal benefits to individual staff.</p>
Steve	<p>Regional Sales Manager for a plant hire company (approx. 120 employees); Former Sales Manager for a plant hire franchisee (approx. 15 employees).</p> <p>As with William, Steve felt that he had an 'unsentimental attitude towards IM' due to working in an industry where people are 'a bit more matter-of-fact and pragmatic, and don't necessarily have time for all the niceties – however well-intentioned or desirable they may be'.</p> <p>He was also cautiously accepting of IM's aims and objectives, and considered it 'a branch of marketing directed inwards at staff, to get everyone singing from the same hymn sheet'.</p>
Carla	<p>Marketing Co-ordinator for a regional fashion retail brand (approx. 35 employees).</p> <p>Carla perhaps saw IM in more transactional terms than others – specifically as a conduit to getting staff to do as she wanted.</p> <p>However, whilst she saw IM as an operationally enabler, she also appreciated its ability to 'spread values, improve people's experience of work and make a positive difference'.</p> <p>She considered her experiences of IM to have been mixed, with some colleagues' resistance to it being detrimental to her enjoyment.</p>
Jess	<p>Area Representative for a public sector trade union (with several thousand members regionally).</p> <p>Jess appreciated IM, and thought it necessary and desirable, but thought that it was often abused to obfuscate unscrupulous managers' true intentions or to keep staff 'towing the line' and obedient.</p> <p>Her experiences of IM had been mixed, and she said that she had at various times been made to feel both more included and more excluded as a result of it.</p>

Table 8: Focus group participants.

9.1) Satisfaction within Internal Marketing

Satisfaction within interorganisational dyads is largely defined by its relationships with power (Lewicki et al, 1998; Geyskens et al, 1999; Sharma & Patterson, 2000; Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003; Lai, 2007; Benton & Maloni, 2005) and trust (Anderson & Weitz, 1989; Anderson & Weitz, 1992; Andaleeb, 1995; Geyskens et al, 1999; Sharma & Paterson, 2000; Jonsson & Zineldin, 2003), being classified as 'social'/'noneconomic' or 'economic'. However, antecedents and characteristics of IM relationship satisfaction are seldom discussed explicitly in IM literature. When explaining what made IM initiatives satisfactory, focus group participants used responses like *"it delivered its objectives"*, *"it got people integrated and customer-oriented"* and *"it was well received"* – generic comments. Jess argued that 'satisfactory' has neutral meaning, like faint praise, whereas 'satisfaction' is stronger. Questioned on what constituted 'satisfaction' in IM, Joanne commented:

"it seems easier to define for the junior partner. When I took part in a job shadowing scheme when I was younger, I felt extremely satisfied during that period because I was learning something new, broadening my skills...becoming a better employee and [enhancing] my career prospects. I also got a lot out of it emotionally. I made new friends who I would socialise with, I could understand my job much better and I got a better understanding of the company I worked for, so I felt more closely bonded to my organisation. And these things made me feel good about myself and my work. I left home each morning with a warm glow. But now I am a manager, the satisfaction I gain through IM is a bit less...easy to define. It's less tangible".

Whilst Joanne's satisfaction as IM junior party encapsulates economic (job prospects) and social/noneconomic (friendships, personal certainty, self-actualisation) factors, power and trust are not mentioned – although better understanding one's job appears a form of empowerment enabling someone to trust their own judgments. When Joanne describes satisfaction from her current perspective – of a senior IM stakeholder – the differences are evident:

"I get satisfaction from seeing a strategy successfully rolled out and knowing that it will have a positive impact upon the charity. I suppose there is also some relief – until it is complete, there is always a risk that it might go terribly wrong, not be embraced by staff or not yield the expected results, and that would lead to a lot of soul-searching and post mortem".

Tellingly, her satisfaction as a manager is fuelled by economic gains for the organisation – or, more accurately, the mitigation of economic risks – whereas as a junior partner it was fuelled by non-economic personal gains. William, Steve and Carla made similar distinctions. No participants volunteered power or trust as factors producing satisfaction as senior partners. It appears that junior parties become satisfied with IM initiatives which *deliver* personal, social *gains*, whereas managers derive satisfaction from initiatives which *avoid* organisational, economic *losses*. Loss aversion theory suggests losses have a psychological impact twice as strong as gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 1992) so, as managers may be more motivated by loss aversion and junior partners by gain, this could significantly increase managers' motivation (relative to junior partners), ensuring successful completion of IM initiatives, and instilling different criteria with which to evaluate success. This could have implications for how participation in IM initiatives is incentivised to different stakeholders, and how success is measured.

9.2) Interactions as a determinant of satisfaction towards internal service delivery

The role of dyadic interactions determines satisfaction towards service and its provision within CM (Solomon et al, 1985). A manufacturer's Regional Manager may visit franchised dealerships (for example), conducting cross-dyad interactions with staff such as directors, salespeople, aftersales, servicing and finance managers. The role undertaken is not simply one of enforcement, but offering market expertise, identifying profit opportunities, advising on new products, organising stocking and deliveries – many roles encompassing cross-dyadic service. Therefore, interorganisational interaction at an interpersonal level may fulfil multiple roles (Etgar, 1979), each invoking differing satisfaction levels in the relationship (Doherty & Alexander, 2006) and service delivery (Lai, 2007; Van Riel et al, 2011).

Within the focus group, William discussed the applicability of this channel phenomenon into IM:

“It’s not just a case of wearing different hats for the different functions that you do...Every time I try to implement change through IM, it’s only one function – IM – but I still adopt different practices in different situations to be effective.”

Although he recognised the need for consistency, preventing employees from perceiving their treatment as inferior to others’, he acknowledged that for each colleague he

“might have a few different roles...to spread the word, be evangelical, to give people some piece of mind and be, if you like, an agent for change, but as a benevolent presence. This is particularly the case if a new initiative is coming out. Also, it’s all a bit more...open to debate at the point when the policy is still being finalised, but when it passes into law, I’m more likely to play the role of auditor or enforcer.”

William therefore suggested that his role depended upon the purpose of each IM interaction and, unlike in marketing channels where successive roles may be repeated frequently due to the short-term cyclical nature of addressing monthly marketing objectives (e.g. – Etgar, 1979), the IM role characteristics evolve longitudinally alongside process maturation. He explained that

“Each phase of IM is completed properly before we move onto the next...for each of those phases, there is a need...to play slightly different roles – to adopt different behaviours and ways of managing the relationship as our expectations grow with the process”.

Despite reiterating the importance of multiple IM roles, William doubted whether these role characteristics, or moving from one to another, affect satisfaction with service provision:

"I don't think my employees get more or less satisfied as we move through the IM process. When I managed a network of agents, satisfaction levels fluctuated. If I helped a franchisee they were extremely satisfied, but when I was having to lay down the law...they were more likely to be unsatisfied. Maybe not in me, but in my role. But in IM, those people who buy into it begin the process satisfied and keep being satisfied. Those who don't are generally dissatisfied all the time."

When asked about employee satisfaction levels, in the service provided within the implementation of IM, and from the service provided by IM practices having been adopted (e.g. - better interdepartmental information flow), William conceded that

"the quality of the relationship between them and me... is probably linked to what they think they will get out of the new working practice. But is that down to the roles I had to play? Or because more open-minded staff members are easier to deal with and more likely to embrace IM? Probably the latter."

Therefore, although IM interaction quality may increase staff satisfaction towards internal service encounters during and after IM implementation, both seem similarly influenced by the predisposition of staff towards IM, and perhaps the interpersonal skills of the senior partner.

9.3) Actors within internal service encounters

Service encounters in marketing channels have been categorised as between (i) customer-contact employee and manager; (ii) customer-contact employee and back-office employee; and (iii) back-office employee and manager (Kang et al, 2002). In each instance, one person from the dominant channel partner interacts with one from the weaker channel partner (little distinction being made regarding which partner organisation provides which category of actor). These were judged the most important channel

partnerships, although the importance of back-office employee and back-office employee (e.g. – between a manufacturer's invoice clerk and supplier's accounts clerk) seems understated. Extant IM literature barely considers who encounters whom individually to implement IM policy or in internal service encounters, perhaps because an IM perspective advocates widespread dismantling of structural barriers to internal exchange (e.g. – Berry, 1981), and therefore this may have been considered incongruous with IM (e.g. – Grönroos, 1981; 1985).

Joanne had experienced a formalised, structured approach:

“It's an hourglass...I'm that narrow bit, but a quarter of the way down. For that top quarter before the sand gets to me, the board members and directors decide upon the philosophy, the goals and objectives which they have for the organisation, and the main routes to get there...I would translate it all into a coherent dialogue to have with the workforce...then when that's sorted, it's quite operational and we take it to the masses”.

Whilst this standardisation of strategic ownership seems commonplace, all participants acknowledged the diffused, haphazard chain of command in spreading acceptance of IM. Jess suggested that, despite organisational diktat on what should be done and how

“the need for consistency vanishes once any IM initiatives have trickled down past the senior managers, it gets farmed out to people by unwilling managers – and sometimes it gets pushed by whoever has most to gain from it. One example was how a job shadowing scheme got pushed by a bunch of technicians who had a genuine interest in seeing how their jobs connected with other people's. They actually got resistance from their supervisors, who were the ones supposed to be pushing the scheme, because they were worried about how their team would cope while their staff member was off shadowing elsewhere”.

In this case, transmission of IM policy has largely gone underground, with informal word-of-mouth between hierarchically equal stakeholders compensating for the policy

abandonment of superiors. The flow here is back-office employee to back-office employee. Moreover, it is only partially interdepartmental (between shadowers and potential shadowees), and partially intradepartmental (between next desk colleagues). Carla believed this phenomenon could impede IM implementation because

“if the jungle drums are beating, and one store manager doesn’t like what’s coming down the line, she will hijack it and talk it down to other store managers. If we’re not there first with our conversation, telling them why it’s a good thing, our job is much harder because we’re battling negative ideas which have already been planted, so we try to get influential store managers on side before we roll anything out. But it’s difficult, because you don’t know how discreet they will be or for how long”.

In contrast, William and Steve welcomed this democratisation of IM. Steve considered it

“inevitable really, and positive. Managers can’t keep hold of it forever. That’s the whole point. It gets adopted by people further down the line. They take ownership, embrace it. Without them buying into it and passing on their enthusiasm to others. It doesn’t get off the ground. And we can’t say “wait, wait, wait, go!” If they’re ready to take it on, it’s already theirs”.

Both Steve and Carla’s experiences mirrored those of interview participant, Eddie, another network-facing regional manager, who discussed using ‘spreaders’ who disseminate organisational messages to colleagues, even using them to bypass official communication channels, increasing credibility and acceptance. Therefore, it appears that non-formalised, unstructured, haphazard interaction channels may transmit awareness and adoption of IM – as may be expected from a postmodernist interpretation of IM.

9.4) Internal Marketing role evolution as reaction to organisational change

The role of actor within channel service encounters evolves as the organisational situation changes (McHugh, 1968; Blumer, 1969; Czepiel, Solomon, Surprenant & Gutman, 1985; Solomon et al, 1985; Hewitt, 1991; Guirguis & Chewing, 2005), but the extent of similar change within IM roles is underexplored in IM literature. Carla's IM role at the Regional Development Agency and her interactions changed considerably during her tenure:

"When I went there, RDAs were the great white hope...my job was to push things forward, to be...evangelistic – an agent for change. To get everyone on board, get them sold on our brand values, to make sure all our good news stories were championed - valued by everyone in the organisation".

However, after the announcement that all RDAs were to be disbanded, Carla's

"...role changed completely – the way in which I had to interact with others, the messages I had to get across".

She found herself hampered as those career-oriented fast trackers most likely to embrace IM approaches sought employment elsewhere. They

"did not want to be associated with a sinking ship in case it tarnished their reputation. So straight away, these thrusting young individuals – very ambitious, well-educated, destined for great things - they no longer had any reason to invest emotionally".

It is possible that employees with the loosest emotional ties to the organisation, and the greatest ability to leave, were those previously embracing IM approaches most enthusiastically. Swift changes necessitate IM actors adopting different roles. Such changes may occur through redundancies, mergers and takeovers (as discussed by

interview participant Bev), and mass recruitment. Carla explained further that, due to the despondency enveloping her organisation, her role

“became very insular and inward-looking...we were no longer reaching out to the world and extending our influence...we were contracting, trying to wean people off our influence, winding down operations...not so much about empowerment, more about rehabilitation”.

Despite showing neither the desire nor necessity to perform ID to decrease demand for the organisation within less desirable workforce segments, Carla outlined an unintentional demarketing, not just of her organisation, but of the IM mindset itself. Whilst Steve and William’s IM roles changed significantly through time, this resulted from their career progression and additional authority, as they retained practices learned earlier and enhanced them with the effects of power (French & Raven, 1959; Lusch, 1976; Gaski, 1986; Dant & Schul, 1992) analysed later. However, Jess discussed major structural and philosophical changes within her union, and especially her stakeholders’ organisation, and their impact upon service encounters:

“Certainly when the public sector was expanding, the [government department] was assimilating new people, getting everyone understanding the potential which this expanded organisation represented. Then, with the new government’s agenda, the message changed overnight, and the organisation’s dealings with staff at a one-to-one level changed immediately. Until 2010, managers were noticeably quite consensual. There was a more touchy-feely approach – ‘I’m okay, you’re okay’. Afterwards, because there was a voluntary redundancy scheme, that went by the wayside. It was more about compliance, and being better citizens”.

Asked whether the organisation deliberately reduced demand from its workforce by making itself less attractive – ID (Vasconcelos, 2008) – Jess commented that the government department

“wasn’t pushing people out the door through its actions, but the new ethos from the government was less about telling people that they are valued, more about asking people to up their game and earn their right to remain. Locally, this was...sanitised and sweetened because managers didn’t want to change their relationship with staff overnight and flick a switch. But the message had very discernibly changed and staff saw that. It was instant really. But the ‘encounter’ itself didn’t really change in the way that it was done, just the message”.

This questions the necessity of service encounters evolving in IM as a reaction to changing organisational circumstances. It seems that change in message alone is sufficient to adapt IM to evolved organisational needs, without necessarily changing the interaction characteristics:

9.5) Extrinsic motivation and satisfaction of staff in Internal Marketing through perceived benefits

Antecedents to relationship satisfaction in CM are often linked to financial performance and economic impact by the stronger partner, and expectation of financial rewards and competitive differentiation by the weaker party (Gassenheimer et al, 1996; Gassenheimer et al, 1998; Ghosh et al, 2004). IM theory neglects these themes, perhaps because IM’s non-coercive nature discourages conceptualisation of partners as ‘stronger’ or ‘weaker’, but it is reasonable to consider the organisation (though perhaps not the managers) as more secure than the staff subjected to IM, and therefore worthwhile ascertaining motivating factors which may orient managers and staff towards IM, building their satisfaction in it. With recent experience as both weaker and stronger partner, Steve agreed that

“I was wooed, I think, in my early career by IM approaches. I had friends in dead-end jobs whose employers would never have considered IM - probably not even known about it. So to experience it sent out a message to me that I was working for a more professional outfit – one with more prestige and a better place to grow a career. I thought I could become a better sales manager than if I’d worked in a back-street place. I thought I’d pick up better

working practices and that my reputation would be enhanced by working for my company. Of course, there were many things which my company did more professionally than others, but to me the importance they placed on IM really emphasised that. It underlined their prestige to me”.

Apart from professional and personal pride in identifying himself with a more prestigious organisation than his friends, Steve linked his organisation's IM orientation with his perceived competitive advantage in the job market (and thus financial rewards). This reflects the trade equity concept existing within supply chain literature, where value accrues to one partner in a dyad by being publicly associated as a trading partner of a specific organisation (Davis & Mentzer, 2008).

William, with similar experience, agreed emphatically that

“part of the reason I’ve [embraced] IM throughout my career – even as a young lad starting out - is because I value being part of an organisation which has a vision and an idea of how to marshal its troops to achieve that vision. Can you imagine spending your working life in an organisation which just drifts, with no direction? Which just carries on taking the same approach to everything, year in, year out? How would you develop? If you worked there for 20 years, you’d still only have one year’s experience, just repeated 20 times. It wouldn’t give you the tools you need to move up”.

Moreover, William and Steve acknowledged that, as they assumed senior roles, the economic performance and financial impact of their IM partners were indirectly linked to those partners’ levels of satisfaction in their relationships with them, with Steve commenting that

“I have targets. If I do my targets, I thrive, if I miss them, I die. If I exceed them, my family and I live very well, and everything else falls into place. Of course, I could manage some horrible, selfish, renegade worker who blatantly rejects IM but still does well in terms of hitting his figures because he’s so driven and aggressive - theoretically. And he would still be helping me to meet my targets. But in reality it never happens. The best people who

put in great performances month in, month out – who effectively guarantee my success – are always those who buy into the ethos of the company, who listen to what we have to say and keep an open mind. They don't moan about having to attend training sessions. They don't think they know it all. They're open to change".

Steve evidently recognises that the economic potential of the company and his own financial situation are improved by those staff most engaged with IM, which helps increase their performances, reinforcing his satisfaction levels both in his relationships with those partners and in the role of IM in those relationships. As noted earlier, he also believes that, just as channel partners may be motivated within channel relationships by the increased ability which the relationship provides them to differentiate themselves from others in their industry or market (Gassenheimer et al, 1996), so the increased ability to differentiate themselves can motivate employees to engage with IM initiatives. Therefore, this is examined next.

9.6) Differential and financial benefits in Internal Marketing

The granting of greater differential benefits through a supply chain partnership can fuel acceptance of it yielding fewer financial benefits (Ghosh et al, 2004), but the extent of this relationship in IM is previously unexplored. Differential benefits could be the ability of a party to differentiate itself from others due to the partnership or – when considered in the context of IM – the granting by one party of privileges incremental to those granted previously. As indicated by Steve's earlier comments, an employee can gain differential benefits from IM, becoming a better employee who can differentiate oneself positively in the job market, especially if the organisation's thorough IM policy is indicative of greater external prestige. When considering how much an employee can differentiate themselves (i.e. – externally to the organisation, and when managing one's career), this differentiation is inextricably linked to potential financial benefits. However, Joanne described how IM had allowed her to distinguish herself from colleagues earlier in her career:

“I’ve always tried to deliver a service, to people outside or inside the organisation. I’ve always taken a great pride in that. I’ve always fostered relationships with people in other departments, not just the people I work with on a daily basis. It just comes naturally really, rather than being for any specific reason. But when I have worked for companies which place an emphasis on this in their IM initiatives, it has really made me feel as though the things which make me different from some other people were being recognised and approved of. Of course, this can lead to career progression sometimes, but even when there was no suggestion of that, just receiving this recognition – from the organisation and from colleagues – really gave me a boost. And, I suppose it did compensate for other things. The more recognised you feel, the more you can tolerate a lack of financial reward”.

Such comments contrast with Roger’s discussion of his organisation spinning false benefits to mask the erosion of real benefits.

9.7) Control and satisfaction in Internal Marketing

Increased stronger party control in a dyadic channel relationship (e.g. - a motor manufacturer over a dealership) increases its satisfaction in the relationship without significantly detracting from that of the weaker party (Gassenheimer et al, 1996), but this phenomenon is unexplored within IM. Having witnessed IM relationships where the stronger party has various levels of control, Jess doubted whether an increase satisfied the stronger party:

“It depends whether it’s the organisation or the individual representing the organisation. I think the managers themselves enjoy additional control. Why wouldn’t you? It means you can get your objectives delivered more easily and get on with your job. But as for the organisation, it seems that the times when they are exercising more control are when they feel the need to be on a crusade. Seeking control seems indicative of a restlessness amongst the organisation’s top brass. Even if they get this control, it just seems to fuel a desire for even more control. Also, the middle managers getting to wield this control don’t really get to enjoy it, as it just leads to ever more goals and targets being piled upon them”.

When asked if she was distinguishing between control and power, or if she considered the two inseparable, she explained

“they’re certainly linked, but you can achieve control by having a better strategy or having more information. Power is about two parties interacting, but control can occur outside that. I would say that control often results in power though”.

Steve, previously employed by a network franchisee, observed that

“being the so-called weaker party can take off some of the pressure. This was true when I worked for a franchised outlet. Our regional manager had quite a bit of control, and he seemed quite comfortable with that, and so were we. It didn’t detract from the relationship. We all knew where we stood. It was actually slightly reassuring to be subject to strong management, rather than being left to drift, and I have always felt the same way within the internal market. People don’t mind being controlled. It gives a framework. They want to know where their responsibilities end and their superiors’ start. Not many people want complete autonomy”.

This comment seems to reflect, in an IM context, Ross & Lusch’s (1982) suggestion that domain uncertainty – over which party owns a specific duty – is a major cause of conflict, and justification for stronger management of the relationship and exercising of control. There is also a suggestion that control is expected within the internal market by both parties due to hierarchy and as a necessary aspect of conducting work.

9.8) Relational and psychological benefits of Internal Marketing

The key benefits of dyadic partnerships in CM are not simply relational, but also psychological – whether at the organisational or individual level (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). Berry (1983), introducing a seminal idea within Relationship Marketing later expanded upon by Gwinner et al (1998), believed the main relational benefits of any partnership to

be (i) the central, stable element underpinning the relationship; (ii) personalisation of the relationship; (iii) amelioration of the central element by introduction of additional benefits; (iv) loyalty through price stability; and (v) employee awareness of their customer-facing responsibility.

Sweeney & Webb (2007, p.474) described psychological benefits as those noneconomic, non-functional benefits like “*perceptions of reliability, empathy, support, [and] understanding between parties*”. Individuals within the ‘weaker’ organisation in channel dyads benefit from guidance and advice, and the security of knowing there is a partner assisting them and sharing mutual objectives, whilst ‘stronger’ party representatives gain from having generic objectives translated into localised contexts and specific actions, and from having their presence legitimised by a partner with more localised credibility and acceptance (e.g. – amongst a local business community). Carla, reflecting upon the differences between relational and psychological benefits in her IM experiences, commented that

“IM has definitely allowed me to instil a culture in my company. At a personal level, it has helped to give me something in common with colleagues who I probably wouldn’t have had much to do with otherwise, and it’s allowed us all to know what we’re responsible for and what kind of mindset to have to get there. But if I think about how it impacts upon my quality of life – if I think about how I feel during my working day and when I kick off my shoes as I go through the front door every evening – I think IM has made my work much more enjoyable because I have closer relationships. I know and trust the people I deal with much more. I suppose going through an IM process is slightly like going on an away day with someone with assault courses and stuff – you see each other a bit differently. You have to pull together on something which you’re piecing together for the first time, and it makes the relationship more personal. I definitely think that me and my partners understand and help each other much more than we would if we’d not been through IM”.

Interestingly, although Carla is the stronger partner in most of her IM interactions, she described how relationships nourished her psychologically. However, William expressed a need for superiors to remain emotionally detached, commenting that

“it’s great to have a smoother relationship with employees through IM, and it’s nice to feel you can trust people and gain their understanding a bit more, but it’s not the be-all-and-end-all. I’m paid to take some grief. It comes with the territory. If I didn’t have broad shoulders, I shouldn’t be doing my job. So yes, it’s nice to feel that the smooth corners have been sanded off relationships, and there are perhaps times when I would have driven home and needed a glass of red straight away to draw a line under a meeting, when now I don’t because the other person has been more mindful of my needs, but it’s not that important. In fact, I think it could be a mistake, a sign of weakness, to have too comfortable a time. I think a bit of fear and mistrust does a boss good”.

Effectively, William agreed that psychological benefits may be enjoyed by stronger IM partners, but that this may carry negative consequences for the manager’s performance and credibility. This questions whether psychological benefits are always desirable within IM, if they are equally desirable for weaker and stronger members, or if they should be tempered by other seemingly negative emotions such as mistrust or suspicion. This prompted scrutiny of the following area, based on CM literature.

9.9) Desirable levels of suspicion within Internal Marketing relationships

In CM, high or low levels of suspicion between dyadic partners damage the relationship, whilst (demonstrating a bell curve) intermediate amounts can prevent hostility and complacency, increasing performance, awareness and appreciation of the relationship’s value (Hunter et al, 2011). Based on William’s previous comments on psychological benefits of IM, a bell curve relationship may benefit IM transactions. William commented that

“they’re not your friends, employees. However much you may like them or have things in common with them, at the end of the day, if you’re their boss, you always stand the chance of being called upon to make a difficult decision about their future. You might have to make a decision which is in the best interests of the company, which has a very negative effect on them – although, of course, you hope that such a situation never arises. And of course, they know that, even if they get on well with you and like and respect you, they know that their first loyalty is to their family, their household. They have to look after

themselves and their own position. So, at the back of everybody's mind, there is a little bit of reservation, of suspicion or mistrust. And that's entirely understandable. It's to be expected and I think it's quite healthy".

When asked if he believed this to impede IM implementation or relationships, he disagreed:

"No, you need some trust. You need to trust in the other person's judgment and integrity and intelligence, but underneath it all you know that the two parties don't have interests which are exactly the same. They hopefully overlap a lot, but they won't be a complete match".

This last comment hinted that trust becomes easier as IM dyadic objectives display more commonality, and that some trust and low levels of suspicion – but not total trust nor a complete absence of suspicion – are desirable. However, he implied that mistrust is desirable, not to increase appreciation of the relationship, but for self-preservation purposes. Jess gave a slightly different interpretation:

"It would be great if my members and [the organisation] could agree totally and want exactly the same things. Then they could trust each other entirely without any suspicion and just get on with their jobs instead of looking over their shoulders. A lack of trust does hold back IM. In a hypothetical, utopian world [laughs], if there was 100% trust between the workforce and the organisation, then maybe IM would be 100% adopted and embraced. There would be no resistance. But, in that perfect world, would IM actually be necessary? The staff would already all be talking to each other and giving a good service to external customers. [The organisation] would not need this charm campaign. There would probably be no IM".

Perhaps these comments stem from an over-simplistic understanding of IM's role and domain, but certainly alluded to underlying tensions perhaps necessary for IM to gain traction. Whilst William described how trust and suspicion within IM may link to

interpersonal goal convergence, the following section examines effects of convergence between individual and organisational relationship characteristics in an IM context.

9.10) Individual versus organisational relationship characteristics in Internal Marketing

Channel dyadic relationship characteristics between individuals may diverge from those of, or intended by, their organisations (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). For example, a manufacturer may wish to be non-confrontational, supportive and consensual when dealing with channel intermediaries, and this may be achieved through the modelling, encouragement and incentivisation of appropriate behaviours amongst its dealer-facing staff through IM processes (e.g. – Grönroos, 1985; Gummesson, 1987). However, if one staff member has personality characteristics, personal circumstances or a contrary belief system impeding their adoption of such working practices, there may be incongruence between the organisational and individual characteristics which flavour the channel dyadic interaction, consequently undermining the interorganisational and interpersonal dyadic relationship in the CM in a phenomenon labelled Supply Chain Contagion (Gaski & Ray, 2004). However, the effects of such a relationship characteristic divergence are unexplored within IM dyads. Carla explained that

“my company is quite vibrant and modern in its brand image, and in what it wants to be. That is its personality, if you like. And they tend to employ people like that in key positions – I suppose the people in the branches who are customer-facing, and the head office people who are branch-facing – they all conform to that sort of ideal. Maybe our accountant and people like that are allowed to be outside that structure, but otherwise, we all fit the company’s personality. So I suppose you would expect that our dealings with each other individually are pretty much how the organisation would want its dealings with us to be, but I’m not sure that’s the case. And that’s because we’ve probably got one manager who is very pushy and ambitious and would probably walk over people to get where she wants to be, another who likes to get along with everyone and have the ‘slowly, slowly catchy monkey’ approach, and then there’s another manager who tries to delegate any dealings with others. So, even though they all have a similar personality to the company – in terms of being modern and trendy and what-have-you – they all have very different ways of dealing with people. So you get a very different experience by dealing with all three of them. So I can’t really see how they can all be interacting with people how the company intends. It just seems impossible to me”.

This concern seems pivotal to the debate over congruence or divergence between organisational and individual personality characteristics within IM interactions. Joanne made a similar observation, but from a bottom-up perspective:

“If I could ensure that all our managers behaved in exactly the same way in their dealings with their staff, to ensure that they all deliver the same message in the same way, and display the same behaviours and values, then that’s still only one half of the equation, isn’t it? Because you’re still dependent on the reaction and behaviours of the staff who they’re interacting with”.

Despite IM being charged with standardising such staff behaviours and reactions, Joanne indicated that a chicken-and-egg situation developed, where some standardisation of the management-facing behaviour of staff was required to implement IM practices successfully and equitably across the workforce. Jess was more pragmatic, suggesting that

“unless you have some sort of brainwashing cultural revolution where you’re able to programme everyone to behave in a certain way, an organisation’s never going to get its behaviours and messages going out undistorted in the way it wanted. And that’s a good thing, because you need someone to humanise it. You need someone to say to the member of staff, “Look, this is [the organisation’s] line, but we’re here to make it work at our level”, and that may involve some negotiation, some reinterpretation, a bit of agreeing to disagree or whatever. And that flexibility is needed. But I think that that comes from individuals at the coal-face of management who haven’t had the chip put in”.

In other words, divergence of individual relationship characteristics from organisational ones within IM may facilitate its smooth, credible implementation, without which there could be damaging conflict, mutual intransigence and deadlock. Nevertheless, within manufacturer-supplier relationships, individuals’ personality variables and their impact on dependence are of primary importance – for example, the impact of alienation and

reciprocity on conflict may be influenced by them (Kale, 1989), where alienation encompasses estrangement and social malintegration (Gaski & Ray, 2004). This appears no less the case in IM. The effect of certain individual relationship characteristics – and the performance of the representative of the stronger party – are considered next.

9.11) 'Stronger' party representative performance and its role in the Internal Marketing relationship

In marketing channels, the supplier's perception of the performance of the manufacturer's representative can directly reflect the working relationship between supplier and manufacturer – performance being the effectiveness with which they are perceived to assist both parties in achieving joint objectives (Gassenheimer et al, 1996). For example, if a manufacturer's representative can find hidden stock, suggest effective campaigns and identify profit opportunities which help both manufacturer and dealer to achieve their targets, then the dealer will invariably consider them to be performing well, promoting a healthy working dyadic relationship (presumably also at an organisational level, but the theory focuses specifically on the individual level relationship). Responding to Yang & Coates' (2010) call to scrutinise dyadic perspectives of IM, the focus group explored how much the weaker partner's perception of the 'stronger' partner's performance plays a role in an IM relationship. Joanne commented that

“when our managers are addressing their staff – either en bloc or individually – on matters relating to IM, then the staff will be making judgments about the IM and on the manager's ability to perform that role. If the manager is comfortable in that role, then the relationship is likely to be perceived as more beneficial and IM is more likely to be adopted successfully”.

It is perhaps unsurprising that staff respond positively to managers who are effective communicators, perceiving confident managers as bringing more value to a relationship. However, Joanne continued that

“when those managers get involved at a more micro-level, and assist in the operational roll-out of initiatives, staff have a chance to judge them against more parameters – and I have been in this position myself, where I have seen how well my supervisor has managed processes with me, such as getting people from different departments working together on customer-facing projects. And the thing which really...impressed me with the stronger managers was their ability to do things which were about me specifically. Instead of just rolling something out generically, they applied it to my needs”.

Examples included instances where the manager had considered Joanne's personal circumstances or offered something which she perceived as individualised service. Carla agreed that this is desirable, and that she adopts such a practice:

“If I want to roll out something to our store managers, I try not to have a one-size-fits-all mentality about it. So if I want the managers to hold a fortnightly coffee meeting with their staff where they talk about customer care in an informal way... then I would explain it to each store manager and relate it to their store. So, our store manager in [town x] has three new assistants, one of whom is a lovely but very shy school leaver, so when I explained the fortnightly coffee meetings to that store manager, I personalised it. I mentioned that she might need to get the new starters up to speed on some of the technical product knowledge to give them confidence and credibility in front of customers, and I said that the school leaver might have specific things which she might need help with...it's not rocket science, I know, but I'd made the conversation with the store manager specific to her. And I suppose I'd also encouraged her to make her dealings with her staff specific to them too”.

William stated that on several occasions, he had directed specific resources towards an individual to help them adopt or benefit from an IM initiative:

“I managed to get hold of some budget to fund a manager with a community outreach project which involved his whole team. It wasn't much money, but he was able to run with something which brought his team together, strengthened their working relationships and

made them better focused on external stakeholders too. I know that the manager in question really appreciated the help. It was very clear that he appreciated it more because it wasn't off the peg. I'd listened to his needs when he put forward a good, structured proposal and done something specifically for him".

As identified in the review of CM literature, both interorganisational supply chain dyad partners can engender commitment through 'idiosyncratic investments' specific to that relationship (Anderson & Weitz, 1992, p.19), driven by coordination efforts, and a shared desire for enhanced performance and competitive advantage (Jap, 1999). Therefore, some individualisation of the internal service encounter may be necessary for maximum effectiveness, rather than generic approaches, and this seems the case with Joanne, Carla and William. When asked if there was a reciprocal element to this phenomenon, William observed that

"the manager in question has always been very committed, but in this one project in particular he made a huge investment in terms of his own personal time. It was very noticeable that he sacrificed far more in terms of time from the point when I provided the financial assistance".

This suggests the benefits of individualised investments within IM may accrue to the organisation, external stakeholders, initial beneficiary, and ultimately the individual benefactor. By default, it also transfers a tension from supply chain literature into IM, potentially contradicting the theory that commitment levels between partners may be increased by greater standardisation, either in how the relationship is conducted or in the working practices of either party (Polo-Redondo & Cambra-Fierro, 2008).

9.12) Strategies for increasing influence and credibility within Internal Marketing interactions

As noted during the review of CM literature, influential managers in marketing channels can increase the effectiveness of their request strategies (their ability to motivate cross-dyad partners to implement their requests) by undertaking low cost but highly perceived favours to prime their partners. This in turn can build their reputation as experts, letting them use recommendations and information exchange to garner yet further influence (Frazier & Summers, 1984). In a conversation exploring the applicability of this technique to IM, Carla commented that

“I do favours instinctively when I am dealing with people. But I find that our store managers are much more likely to do what I ask without questioning – things like having the pre-designed point of sales display materials – if I have done something which they could regard as a favour. And of course, I wouldn’t be willing or able to do this at great cost to myself, but I’m certainly able to help them. They’re more likely to play ball because they think they possibly owe me that in return”.

In this, Carla appeared to leverage on reciprocity and the perception of having done a significant favour, but did not follow it up as part of a larger strategy. William and Steve had also done low-cost favours to sweeten a relationship, but felt less inclined to do so, considering that their higher hierarchical positions and experience commanded respect and induced partners to follow their advice, and that a “circle of reciprocity” (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003, p.1182) was undesirable. Whilst all five participants had used favours to prime partners before making requests, none considered such an approach impactful upon their partners’ perceptions of their expertise, and none consciously used it to access other influence techniques such as information exchange or recommendations - these were used, but not within a stepped, sequential process.

In CM, the dyadic strategies of information exchange, promises and recommendations are considered precursors to dyadic success and increased relationalism, whilst threats, legalistic pleas and requests are detrimental to the growth of relationalism (Boyle & Dwyer, 1995). Once more, the use and effects of these behaviours and strategies within an IM context were explored. William and Steve used information exchange to personalise relationships with IM dyadic partners, although both agreed that information exchange and recommendations were more useful to them in dealings with external stakeholders. As Steve commented,

“if I am managing someone through an IM process, trying to make them more customer-oriented by following a process, it’s just straight management really – setting out the steps to be followed, ensuring they have the knowledge and resources to do it, and then checking up at regular intervals to make sure they’re doing it. It’s not really like dealing with franchisees or agents, where you might have some information on their local market which you can share useful insights from. But yes, taking that approach can build a relationship”.

Whilst all participants except Jess considered promises an unnecessary evil for managers, to be avoided wherever possible due to the subsequent obligations placed on a manager, they considered promises made by the weaker party, when delivered, instrumental in building trust, although Joanne noted that

“it can create a very hierarchical feel to a relationship. It can sometimes introduce fear – well, maybe not fear but a sense of duty and subservience - which is not something I would like to foster, especially within an IM framework”,

contradicting the notion from supply chain literature that promises boost relationalism (Boyle & Dwyer, 1995). Moreover, whilst all participants used requests routinely, and expected to be subjected to them by IM partners, none considered threats or legalistic pleas appropriate to IM. Steve commented,

“If it gets to that stage, the relationship is on run-out, the member of staff is heading down a disciplinary route and would probably be out the building soon, because the relationship had been irreconcilably damaged”,

This reinforces the idea that IM is consensual (Grönroos, 1984) and that, wherever contractual leverage or coercion is used to influence an internal stakeholder, the process has passed from marketing to HR (Ahmed & Rafiq, 1993). The theory that high power suppliers in dyadic channel relationships are more likely to resort to non-mediated approaches, like recommendations and information exchange, than mediated approaches like threats and legalistic pleas (Boyle & Dwyer, 1995), therefore seems inapplicable to IM, as the presence of mediated approaches contradicts the conditions under which interactions may constitute IM – whilst Steve and William had both used legitimate power occasionally to remind internal stakeholders of their obligations, they each commented this use was very brief, unplanned and not strategic. Likewise, although dominant parties within CM dyads are generally unconcerned by negative side effects of coercion strategies (Gelderman et al, 2008), workplace coercion would be outside the definition of IM used in this research (Ahmed & Rafiq, 1993), and therefore this theory also seems inapplicable to IM.

The major non-coercive power sources in marketing channels are expert, legitimate and referent (French & Raven, 1959; Lusch, 1976; Gaski, 1986; Dant & Schul, 1992), and there is evidence here that expert power (gained by possessing expertise) and legitimate power are used, but less than in interorganisational channels. Rather, all participants have IM relationships owing far more to the use of referent power (arising when partners identify with, admire or respect the partner). Furthermore, it seems possible that such a phenomenon is not solely top-down, but that committed, engaged weaker partners enjoy some referent power over supervisors. Whilst this was stated nowhere explicitly in the

focus group, and may not be something of which participants are consciously aware, it was clear that managers felt dutiful to engaged subordinates, and this influenced their actions in favour of the junior partner. For example, Joanne commented that

“there are certain members of staff based elsewhere who I would answer the phone to if they rang me as I was leaving the office at 5pm on a Friday, even if it was inconvenient. If they are people who have done me a favour or gone the extra mile to heed my advice, I would make that sacrifice,”

which appears to be the pull of reciprocity,

“but there are also a couple of other people who I would inconvenience myself to help, not because I owed them a favour, but just because they...they seem to have the lifeblood of [the charity] flowing through their veins. They seem to live and breathe it. They are Mr and Mrs [Charity]. It’s admiration, I suppose, appreciation of how they conduct themselves as employees”.

Clearly, referent power was a factor here, even if unconsciously and not confined to IM.

9.13) Staff and manager control in Internal Marketing

Suppliers in channel dyads may surrender control to manufacturers who are responsive, attentive and perform well (Gassenheimer et al, 1996), but no theory explores whether the junior IM dyadic partner may willingly and consciously cede control to senior counterparts who they perceive as staff-focused or capable. All five focus group participants considered such an upward surrender of control not just unrealistic, but undesirable and inappropriate to IM. As William commented,

“as a senior manager, I want IM to empower my staff. I want them to be able to access the tools they need to do their jobs better, to be more self-sufficient and maybe even

entrepreneurial. The last thing I want is for them to start reacting to the trust I have put in them by passing the buck upwards. That would be totally counterproductive”.

Indeed, Steve considered it more likely for control to be surrendered downwards, as

“good managers know when to loosen the reins, and as a desire for a more independent workforce is [at the heart of] IM, managers should be aware of how they can use IM to do less micromanagement and free up more time for other aspects of their jobs. It’s all relative though. You would never want to let go of too much control. You would always want to be there in the frame somewhere, making your presence felt and staying in the loop”.

However, the idea of surrendering control, especially from weaker to stronger partners, appears largely inapplicable to IM.

9.14) The influence of dependence, interdependence, and dependence asymmetry, on Internal Marketing relationships

To understand the effects which stronger channel partners’ strategies have on weaker counterparts’ interactions with them, one must ascertain the levels and influence of each partner’s dependence upon the relationship and the potential dependence asymmetry between the two parties (Payan & McFarland, 2005; Chung et al, 2008; Lai, 2009). However, scant regard is paid to this phenomenon within IM theory. Jess commented that

“our members have become more dependent recently – in the last five years - as a result of the economic climate. These [public sector workers] are more dependent on keeping the jobs which they have. Of course, at the same time as this, the organisation itself has become less dependent on keeping each individual member of staff. They aren’t any less dependent upon those skills and attributes which the employee brings to the table, but if the organisation has been tasked with losing several thousand employees, then obviously there’s not the same requirement as before to keep the staff happy. It can afford to be more ‘take it or leave it’. And it’s very obvious that, within this period, with this rebalancing of power and dependency, interactions between the staff and the organisation have

become more rigid, enforced, mechanised. It's difficult to give examples, but the general feeling is that staff do things because of a sense of obligation much more now, and their participation is on a much more ticky-box level".

Jess's notion of increased asymmetry in dependence between organisation and individual staff members fuelling a decrease in engagement or relationalism in the employee was partly reinforced by Joanne's comment that

"during the economic downturn, I think our staff became more...well, frightened really. Fearful of losing their job. So they noticeably tended to toe the line in quite an unquestioning manner. We tried very hard as an organisation not to take this for granted and use it as an excuse to become more authoritarian, because we did not want the staff to become more timid. That just drives problems underground and undermines all the good things that come from IM. We actually had to make a concerted effort to bring our staff back out of their shell, so we could get better communication flows within the charity, and all the good things that follow on from that".

Joanne implied that an organisation may attempt to capitalise on dependence asymmetry between itself and its workforce by issuing edicts rather than fostering conversation and accord, but that this could be damaging, as the benefits of the IM perspective could be lost. Therefore, there appears a need, indicated by extant literature to occur within supply chains, for each partner (particularly the stronger) to understand the extent of dependence asymmetry between organisation and individual, as it may affect employees' willingness to engage in certain activities central to successful IM, and instil a siege mentality which may be culturally and commercially deleterious.

Perceptions of lower independence in one's partner may lead to more punitive behaviour within a dyad. In supply chains, the weaker party's punitive actions may be influenced by perceptions of their own and the stronger party's independence, punitive capabilities and actions. Punitive capability asymmetry affects the use of punitive actions whilst interdependence asymmetry does not (but is a bilateral deterrence) (Kumar et al, 1995;

1998). Despite the concept of punishment seeming incongruous with IM, it could perhaps occur interpersonally, contrary to organisational strategies, precipitating relationship breakdown and undermining IM approaches in more extreme cases, although no participants here had experienced such behaviour.

William commented that there could be one positive effect of asymmetry of dependence for the organisation:

“I’ve noticed that, whilst very needy, dependent staff members are less likely to take the main ideas of IM and run with them, make them their own and reinterpret them in their job roles, they are more likely to follow a leader. Of course, that’s not always a good thing. You don’t want the staff to be insubordinate, but at the same time, you want them to be independent and to be able to...well, sometimes to challenge what the boss is saying. If we surround ourselves with yes men and women then we run the risk of walking over a cliff and everyone is too docile to tell us. But the good thing is that you can perhaps mould people a bit more. They’re more malleable”.

When asked to give an example, he explained that

“well, I’ve noticed that you can sometimes model behaviour a bit more with more dependent members of staff. You know, you can lead them by example and they are more likely to buy into your way of doing things. Just as an example, I’m very outgoing and make a point of speaking with everyone in our organisation. And we have this quite shy young lad working for us, and when he’s accompanying me around the building, I’m conscious of the fact that he’s watching me and changing his behaviour slightly, making a conscious effort to adopt similar behaviour”.

As previously discussed, McFarland et al’s (2008) Supply Chain Contagion theory suggests that in a marketing channel, the manufacturer’s behaviours displayed in dealings with others are often replicated by suppliers in their dealings with others if they have observed such behaviours and there is an asymmetry in dependence between manufacturer and supplier. Whilst William’s experiences may have stemmed from a similar phenomenon in the internal market, it is difficult to tell as, in this case, the staff

member's youthfulness, lack of experience, need for a role model, and impressionable nature may have influenced his adoption of William's internal customer-facing behaviours more than the level of dependence asymmetry between himself and William. More research is required to explore this in isolation.

9.15) Incentivisation of relationship-building in Internal Marketing

Within a supply chain, relationship-building incentives, rather than contractual ones, improve commitment and performance (Sheu & Hu, 2008). It therefore seems feasible to improve performance outcomes by incentivising individuals within an IM strategy to adhere to predetermined processes aimed at enhancing relationalism, and this question was explored in the focus group. Both William and Steve had backgrounds in industries where staff are incentivised towards performance targets using commercial criteria, so had strong opinions. William presented the case that

“giving staff targets based upon commercial outcomes can be very beneficial in terms of getting them to look after your own monthly performance, but it can also be very problematic. As a junior member of staff, I have been targeted with achieving ‘x’ amount of sales... and it has certainly been an incentive...And it has made me work hard...And it has encouraged me to have those difficult conversations with people which I would otherwise have shied away from...But it can also be counterproductive. I’ve done deals which are wrong for the company and for the relationship with the customer, simply to get to a number and earn my commission bonus. So it has not done the company any good in the long run”.

Steve agreed with this, saying that

“it is often a mistake to incentivise people financially to deliver a commercial outcome, I think, because there are so many things outside their control. You could have a member of staff who does all the right things, works hard, follows the right processes, has the right attitude, and has natural talent, but doesn’t get to his target because something hasn’t fallen into place...Then you can have the exact opposite. Someone who is a tosser...but does their target because something lands on a plate. Not only have you rewarded the wrong person, but you’ve also, as a company, wasted your money and not got any benefit from spending it. In fact, you might just have encouraged the tosser to be a tosser again, and psychologically kicked your best member of staff”.

Both William and Steve explained their experiences of incentivising customer-facing staff in a sales role, but agreed the same principle could apply if, instead of incentivising sales, you incentivised relationship strength. William explained that

“you could incentivise someone going through an IM initiative to foster better links with their external stakeholders, and to have better relationships with their customers. You could say that that fits in with the IM ethos – getting staff more customer-focused for the commercial benefit of the organisation. But what would be a mistake, in my opinion, would be to hand out questionnaires or satisfaction surveys to customers, then pay staff based upon those scores. You would then have the same problem as in the sales situation – you could fluke it and earn a bonus, or you could do everything right but be unlucky and not gain the bonus or recognition. There are too many other things which could be happening to muddy the waters – too many things which could be the real hidden reasons for success and failure. Things which may be down to the organisation rather than the individual, like the strength of the brand or the invoicing procedure. The answer is to incentivise staff members to do the things which lead to satisfaction (or, if we’re talking about salespeople, to sales). So by all means measure the outcomes, but incentivise the process – target people on the number of customer calls they make, their speed of response, and so forth. The results should follow automatically, it would be fairer, and people would be incentivised and motivated”.

William and Steve both considered the use of financial incentives feasible within IM but, to adhere to the philosophy of IM, incentives should be applied to processes rather than outcomes. They also commented that, in their experience, outcome-related incentives might encourage staff to adopt behaviours destructive to relationalism, perhaps alienating stakeholders and damaging the long-term health of the organisation. There was an implicit recognition that incentivisation, especially financial, could be incongruous with IM, which focuses on soft, relational interactions as part of a process to improve hard, economic outcomes by default. In other words, just as shared norms and values within a marketing channel moderate the relationship between interdependence and influence strategies (Lai, 2009), so shared norms between organisation and individual promoted within IM should be observed when considering how to exert influence over staff. Interestingly, CM literature barely considers financial incentivisation when discussing manufacturer influence over a supplier, instead examining the phenomena which occur around the

negotiating table. This perhaps undermines understanding both in the supply chain and in the internal market.

9.16) Cooperation and trust in Internal Marketing

Cooperation is considered crucial in mitigating relationship decay and dissolution in marketing channels (De Hildebrand e Grisi & Puga Ribiero, 2004), with cooperation and trust linked to goal congruence, in turn boosting relationship success and longevity (Jap, 2009). However, the effects of cooperation have not been explored in IM literature. When asked to discuss how they perceived cooperation within IM, participants agreed that it entailed

“more than one party working towards a common goal”,

“adopting shared approaches”,

and

“finding ways to buy into the IM philosophy which apply to lots of stakeholders”

and, whilst they believed trust to have many other sources (e.g. – relationship length and recalling a partner’s previous positive behaviour), they agreed that trust could stem from cooperation, and each recounted at least one instance of when it had done so within IM. Moreover, each considered goal congruence a key foundation of IM. Carla commented that

"I've never done IM without goal congruence being at the heart of it. The store managers and I are always tied into the same aims and expectations. It usually focuses on increasing sales and profits, but there are objectives which lie along the route to those commercial outcomes".

Steve expanded, saying that

"...it's possible for each party to have some different goals as well. You know, the staff member might have the goal of making himself more of a marketable commodity on the job market – which is something I'm not likely to share as an ambition for him – but so long as we share the same overall goal for the business and the project, then it's that overarching common goal which is important".

No participants foresaw circumstances where they could develop strong ongoing working relationships with partners who did not share the same fundamental goals, so this theory appears entirely transferable from CM to an IM context.

9.17) Compliance recognition in Internal Marketing dyads

In the supply chain, the influence strategies explored earlier help achieve channel member compliance without improving relational outcomes. Non-coercive strategies produce greater compliance (apart from making recommendations, which reduces it) (Payan & McFarland, 2005). Moreover, stronger channel dyadic members often recognise compliance in partners' behaviours simplistically and in a binary fashion (Gelderman et al, 2008). If applied to the internal market – and if one accepts compliance as a realistic condition, given Rafiq & Ahmed's (1993) definition of IM as non-coercive – it is unclear whether those holding power are therefore poorly equipped to judge accurately the extent of others' compliance (e.g. – to brand values or elements of an IM initiative). During exploration of this, William suggested that

“compliance is rather a strong term, a bit legalistic and implying that someone is to fulfil a contract or suffer the consequences. I wouldn’t naturally think in terms of compliance. But I’d certainly be looking at whether someone is fitting in with the overall ethos of IM, embracing and adopting it. I suppose you could call that compliance, but I think it’s more...acculturation”.

Jess agreed:

“People take IM onboard in different ways. It has slightly different meanings to everyone. It’s quite nuanced and it needs interpretation in a way that is meaningful to the individual. So I would not think of it as compliance either”.

This view summarised all the participants’ stance on compliance. Asked how they perceive acculturation, or the embracing of IM, amongst their partners, they avoided black-and-white judgments on a bipolar scale, but saw acculturation as gradual and unique to each partner. Therefore, Gelderman et al’s (2008) criticism of managers in CM dyads seems specific to the supply chain, with its clearly defined interorganisational contractual obligations, and entirely inapplicable to the IM environment.

9.18) Summary of findings from the focus group on perspectives and theories from Channel Management literature in an Internal Marketing context

During presentation of the focus group findings, in which perspectives and theories from CM literature were explored in an IM context, the major insights to emerge, discussed in the following chapter, may be summarised as follows:

- In exploring the role of satisfaction (section 9.1), junior partners may derive more satisfaction from delivery of personal and social gains within an IM initiative, whereas senior partners may derive more satisfaction from avoidance of organisational and economic losses. Due to loss aversion theory (Kahneman &

Tversky, 1992), this could result in managers becoming more motivated than staff to implement IM successfully and judge IM initiative success by different criteria, potentially impacting upon possible incentivisation strategies and IM metrics.

- Whilst examining determinants of satisfaction towards internal service delivery (section 9.2), it appeared that the role of IM actor changes to suit the purpose of each IM interaction at an individual level, and generally evolves longitudinally, commensurate with the maturation of the IM process at an organisational level. Whilst Solomon et al's (1985) theory - of the role of dyadic interactions as determinant of service provision satisfaction – appears transferable from the supply chain to the internal market, both variables appear similarly influenced by staff predisposition towards IM and possibly the soft skills of the senior partner.
- Scrutiny of the relationship structure within internal service encounters and, more broadly, within transmission of IM (section 9.3) revealed that much interaction is tacit, informal, unstructured, haphazard and non-formalised - often conducted on a word-of-mouth basis between hierarchically equal internal stakeholders. This may be beneficial to organisations as a credible route to implementation.
- Just as roles within service encounters evolve in supply chains to fit changed organisational conditions (e.g. – Hewitt, 1991; Guirguis & Chewing, 2005), it appeared that in the internal market (section 9.4), changes in the characteristics of the message conveyed and the interaction itself are necessary to track such changes.
- During the examination of motivation and satisfaction (section 9.5), weaker party expectations of financial rewards arising from stronger party actions (e.g. – Ghosh et al, 2004) were not explicitly apparent, but could be adjudged to exist indirectly

as weaker members recognised a competitive advantage within the job market resulting from experiences and association with an organisation undertaking robust IM – just as supply channel partners recognise a differential advantage from associating with prestigious others (Gassenheimer et al, 1996). Moreover, this staff perception can motivate them to engage with IM.

- When exploring differential benefits in more detail and from both bottom-up and top-down perspectives (section 9.6), although organisations appear able to enjoy economic benefits from IM, these are largely achieved indirectly and driven by increased staff retention, continuity of expertise and increased staff goodwill – suggesting the key organisational benefits are not achieved at the expense of staff benefits, but through the fulfilment and delivery of them.
- The main relationships between control and satisfaction described by Gassenheimer et al (1996) in supply chains have very different characteristics within the internal market (section 9.7) due to the legalistic mechanisms defining domains within the supply chain and the incongruity between quasi-coercive approaches and the IM paradigm. However, as in marketing channels, domain uncertainty within internal markets may produce conflict, legitimising strong management in which control is overt. Moreover, within a hierarchical organisational structure, at least some authoritative control would be expected by both parties.
- Just as manufacturers and suppliers in marketing channels enjoy relational and psychological benefits of the relationship (Sweeney & Webb, 2007), so do IM partners (section 9.8), although the performance and credibility of stronger partners may be undermined by the psychological benefits enjoyed if they deliver exaggerated levels of trust or depleted levels of suspicion in their junior partners.

- Moreover, just as it is desirable for supply chain dyadic partners to retain intermediate levels of mistrust and suspicion (Hunter et al, 2011), some mistrust may be desirable amongst IM partners (section 9.9) for self-preservation purposes, although mistrust and suspicion are likely to decrease commensurate with IM partner goal convergence.
- Whilst Sweeney & Webb (2007) recognised the divergence between organisational and individual relationship characteristics in interorganisational dyads (section 9.10), the focus group findings suggested such a divergence in IM transactions may be beneficial to the credible implementation of IM, humanising the experience - although some IM relationship standardisation appears desirable to ensure staff perceptions of equitable treatment.
- Gassenheimer et al's (1996) study, of the effect of stronger party performance on 'weaker' party perceptions of the relationship's success, was explored within an internal market context (section 9.11). Staff appear most responsive to managers who communicate IM ably. However, just as significant to levels of responsiveness was evidence of individualisation of the IM approach by the manager, especially by making 'idiosyncratic investments' – specific to the individual, rather than generic to the IM strategy – elsewhere considered so important within supply chain relationships (Anderson & Weitz, 1992, p.19). The benefits of such investments appear to accrue to both individuals and the organisation. This creates a potential balancing act between the need for individualisation within IM and the standardisation elsewhere deemed desirable (Polo-Redondo & Cambra-Fierro, 2008).

- Of the numerous strategies used by supply chain partners to increase reciprocal influence (e.g. – Frazier & Summers, 1984), those most applicable to IM dyads (section 9.12) were only used in an isolated, non-sequential manner. The granting of favours and making of promises were considered largely inappropriate for use by the stronger IM party due to subsequent obligations and lack of room for manoeuvre, whilst threats and legalistic pleas were dismissed as incongruous with the underlying non-coercive IM philosophy.
- Of the power sources explored within marketing channels (e.g. – Lusch, 1976; Gaski, 1986; Dant & Schul, 1992), referent power was considered far more applicable to IM (section 7.3.12) and may be used just as readily and effectively by junior partners as by senior ones. Any use of legitimate power was sporadic, brief and non-strategic – again, viewed as incongruous with the non-coercive nature of IM.
- Gassenheimer et al's (1996) study of channel intermediaries surrendering control to responsive, attentive and high-performing partners (section 9.13) appeared almost totally inapplicable to IM although, due to a desire for a more independent and empowered workforce, some managers may loosen their control over junior partners slightly.
- In section 9.14, the influence of partner dependence, interdependence and dependence asymmetry previously studied in the supply chain (e.g. – Payan & McFarland, 2005; Chung et al, 2008; Lai, 2009) was explored in an IM context. It appeared that an increased dependence asymmetry could bring reduced engagement or relationalism from the junior member and, whilst organisations may become more authoritarian if less dependent than their workforces, this could obscure the IM perspective, with a decline in related benefits.

- Just as relationship-building incentives in supply chains have been encouraged (Sheu & Hu, 2008), they were deemed viable within IM (section 9.15), and more likely to increase relationalism, reduce alienation, and be fair and equitable if targeting processes rather than outcomes, although it was implied that financial incentivisation may be considered by some stakeholders as slightly incongruous with the IM ethos.
- Likewise, supply chain theory linking dyadic cooperation with relationship health and longevity (De Hildebrand e Grisi & Puga Ribiero, 2004), and linking cooperation and trust via goal congruence to similar outcomes (Jap, 2009), was considered entirely transferable into IM (section 9.16), with participants considering cooperation an antecedent of trust, and goal congruence a key foundation of IM.
- However, supply chain theory linking non-coercive strategies with compliance (Payan & McFarland, 2005) translated less comfortably into IM (section 9.17), with compliance itself perceived as too authoritarian, and perhaps even redolent of coercion, for the IM ethos. Participants instead spoke of acculturation and, rather than making bipolar judgments, saw the process as gradual.

The table overleaf illustrates the transferability of major CM theories into an IM context:

Theory	Summary	Transferable to IM?
Solomon et al (1985)	Dyadic partners derive satisfaction from the dyadic relationship.	Yes. Senior partners are satisfied by reduction in organisational, economic losses, junior partners more by personal and social gains.
Solomon et al (1985)	Dyadic actor roles evolve as the organisation-level relationship matures, delivering increased satisfaction.	Yes. Soft skills and disposition to IM are also determinants.
Hewitt (1991); Guirguis & Chewning (2005)	Service encounter agent roles evolve to fit changed organisation-level conditions.	Yes. Little difference between intra- and inter-organisational relationships.
Ghosh et al (2004)	Weaker parties expect competitive advantages due to association with prestigious partners.	Much less explicit in internal market, but present amongst some participants.
Gassenheimer et al (1996)	Organisations enjoy economic benefits from dyadic partnerships.	Yes, but in IM these are achieved indirectly (e.g. – through lower staff churn).
Gassenheimer et al (1996)	Domain uncertainty creates conflict between dyadic partners.	Yes, although the contractual, hierarchical mechanisms between organisation and employee often mitigate this.
Sweeney & Webb (2007)	Dyadic partners enjoy relational and psychological benefits from a partnership.	Yes, although psychological benefits enjoyed by a stronger partner may undermine their performance if mishandled.
Hunter et al (2011)	Intermediate levels of mistrust and suspicion are desirable between dyadic partners.	Yes, for self-preservation, although goal convergence delivers trust.
Sweeney & Webb (2007)	Differences between organisational and individual relationship characteristics may be desirable in dyads.	Yes, to humanise and individualise the interpersonal partnership, although equitable treatment is needed across employee groups.
Gassenheimer et al (1996)	Responsiveness of the stronger party is viewed by the weaker party as a key to the relationship's success.	Yes – however, the previous and following points provide a caveat to this.
Anderson & Weitz (1992)	'Idiosyncratic investments' facilitate committed dyadic relationships.	Yes, although equitability across the workforce is a consideration.
Frazier & Summers (1984)	A broad range of influence strategies are used between dyadic partners.	This is much less the case in IM. Influence strategies are used much less frequently, less in a structured, strategic manner, and coercive influence strategies are avoided.
Lusch (1976) Gaski (1986) Dant & Schul (1992)	Expert, legitimate and referent power sources are used within dyadic relationships.	Legitimate power is almost totally rejected in IM. Referent power is widespread, but balanced between stronger

		and weaker parties.
Gassenheimer et al (1996)	Dyadic partners may surrender control to responsive, attentive and high-performing partners.	Almost completely absent from IM relationships (at a conscious level).
Payan & McFarland (2005) Chung et al (2008) Lai (2009)	Partner dependence, interdependence, and dependence asymmetry influence the characteristics and success of a dyadic relationship.	An increased dependence asymmetry could reduce junior partner engagement and relationalism.
Sheu & Hu (2008)	Relationship-building incentives are effective in channel partnerships.	They are likely to increase relationalism and reduce alienation in IM, but should be process-driven and probably non-financial.
De Hildebrand e Grisi & Puga Ribiero (2004)	Dyadic cooperation increases relationship health and longevity.	Yes, totally transferable.
Jap (2009)	Goal congruence between partners brings trust and increased relationship health and longevity.	Yes, totally transferable.
Payan & McFarland (2005)	Non-coercive influence strategies foster compliance between dyadic partners.	Seemingly much less so in an IM context – gradual acculturation being more prevalent in bringing ‘commonality’ rather than ‘compliance’.

Table 9: The transferability of Channel Management themes to Internal Marketing.

9.19) Summary of Chapter 9

This chapter analysed findings from the focus group. It sought to ascertain the importance of satisfaction between parties engaged in IM, and the extent to which interpersonal interactions and the actors’ characteristics are determinants of satisfaction within internal service delivery. The evolution of IM’s role as a reaction to organisational change has been gauged, as has the importance of perceived benefits in motivating and satisfying staff. An explanation was offered of the various benefits of IM, not just in terms of the control or satisfaction achieved by stakeholders, but the potential differential, financial, relational and psychological benefits. Factors impacting upon IM were explored, such as differing levels of suspicion, the variance between the characteristics and performance

levels of the organisation and individuals within it, and strategies aimed at increasing influence and credibility within IM interactions. Moreover, the influence of control, dependence, interdependence and dependence asymmetry were discussed, alongside that of incentivisation, cooperation, trust and compliance recognition. The chapter concluded with a general discussion about the overall applicability of theories from CM literature into IM contexts.

The following chapter concludes the thesis by explaining how the aims and objectives of the research have been met, the implications for academia and business arising from the research, its limitations and the opportunities which it presents for future research.

Chapter 10) Conclusions

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10.1) Introduction to the Conclusions chapter

In the previous three chapters, the interview and focus group findings have been analysed according to the research aims and objectives.

Chapter 7 provided findings and analysis of the interviews with IM stakeholders to reconceptualise IM, complementing top-down, organisational, commercial perspectives with those of individual managers and employees who design, implement, monitor, manage, administer, communicate, transmit and participate in IM. This was undertaken

through the lens of IM literature explored in chapter 2, and those strands of related literature discussed in chapter 3.

As the pilot interview presented unexpected, meaningful insights into Internal Demarketing, chapter 8 explored this phenomenon specifically, building upon Vasconcelos' (2008) article, especially regarding differing levels of internal market segmentation and organisational intent.

Whilst the interviews enabled participants to democratise the research process and steer conversations in their chosen directions, this meant certain research objectives were partially unmet – specifically, those exploring potential applicability into IM contexts of extent dyadic theories from CM literature explored in chapter 4. Such a 'testing' of interorganisational concepts in an intraorganisational context was more postpositivistic in its intentions than the exploratory, theory-building nature of the initial interviews, so chapter 9 provided the findings and analysis from a focus group instigated for this purpose alone.

This conclusions chapter will gather the analysed findings, delivering the research objectives, discussing how the aims have been addressed, and presenting the case for a broad recontextualisation of IM and new taxonomisation of ID, explaining its importance to the academic field, to organisations, and to IM's multiple stakeholders.

First, sections 10.1.1 to 10.1.3 comprise a reflexive account of what we have learned about IM through the research, the way in which the research choices have influenced the

findings, choices which should be made differently if the research be repeated, and potentially fruitful directions for future research.

10.1.1) Reflection upon the emerging knowledge of Internal Marketing

In addition to emerging knowledge of the phenomenon of IM, the research has produced a wealth of information on how the participants relate to IM by experiencing it. Some had a relatively shallow understanding of IM – or perhaps alternatively considered IM itself a shallow phenomenon – and limited themselves to describing emails, posters and meetings, rather than offering opinion on the intent, ethos and context behind them. Nonetheless, it may be argued that, within a social constructivist project, IM is whatever those who experience IM, rather than the researcher or previous authors, deem it to be. For this reason, it was decided not necessarily to give primacy to deeper participant interpretations of IM, but to accept face value accounts wherever possible. Therefore, the reader learns about ‘brown bag lunches’ and town hall meetings, incentive nights out and head office visits, and can appreciate the context within which the actors experience.

By the end of the research, we learn that IM is understood by participants at multiple levels, with each offering a distinctive account of what they believe it to be. We see that, for some, the experience of IM is positive, constructive and appreciated, whilst for others it represents unnerving change, a tiresome diversion, and even (in ID) the vehicle for their marginalisation. When done well, IM brings together employees collaboratively, but when botched or misappropriated, it can isolate, upset, and even create an ‘us and them’ mentality. It appears that dyadic interactions, and those involving multiple actors, are a major influence upon IM. The adage that ‘people buy from people’ seems as apposite within IM channels as between salespeople and external customers.

Certain contradictions reveal themselves. Whilst IM literature has long recognised the need for board level buy-in, there was no previous debate over the potentially deleterious effect of perceived privilege, which here colours employees' acceptance of message credibility. It is also apparent that some organisations attempt to adopt IM at times beneficial to them, as campaigns, rather than permanently as a managerial philosophy underpinning their treatment of staff, and this does not go unnoticed by its targets. Moreover, an employee's experience of IM appears influenced by their role and level of seniority within an organisation, their intended outcomes, and especially whether they are what may be considered the weaker or stronger partner in IM exchanges – although terms such as 'recipient' or 'instigator' are inherently problematic, given IM's pursuance of co-creation and reciprocity.

10.1.2) Critique of the choices made, and their influence upon the research findings

Although the research was intended to be bottom-up and emancipatory, insofar as it provided an outlet for previously underrepresented actors within IM, it was not a pure existential phenomenological project, because the direction of the interviews was heavily influenced by an almost exhaustive review of the IM literature. Therefore, there were a priori themes originating outside the participants' comments, even though these were a subtle background presence, helping to shape interviews rather than dominate them.

The choice to ascertain the transferability of CM theories into an IM context meant that part of the data collection process became more positivistic in order to elicit answers to specific questions. This jarred slightly with the more free flowing semi-structured interviews used to understand IM itself, and the researcher's role in the interview became more dominant. One possible solution would have been to separate the research into two independent projects – the exploratory section perhaps being conducted in a more

unstructured, relativist manner to deliver a purer existentialist phenomenological inquiry. Likewise, the sample strategy – having representation of actors from different industries, age groups, levels of job seniority, and so on – perhaps led to an overly post positivistic pursuit of representativeness, if not generalisability, at the expense of deeper insights. To this extent, the research has adopted two epistemological positions which have not necessarily been easy to accommodate, and which some readers may consider to be a pluralistic conflagration of ideas – although the rationale was to court a wide readership.

The choice of data analysis method was also a difficult one. Template Analysis was selected for the pilot interview due to its thoroughness and its capacity to deal with a priori themes, but more importantly its tendency to lay bare themes and sub-themes for subsequent exploration. To this end, it was useful, but its rigidity and linearity was perhaps at odds with the exploratory intentions of the research. Although the choice of Mauthner & Doucet's (1998) Voice Centred Relational Method, for the analysis of later transcripts, was more in fitting with the semi-structured interviews, it may still have been considered an unnecessary limitation or – to existential phenomenologists – an attempt which should not be made to justify the researcher's abilities. It is certainly true that, at times, the methodology cart was put before the insight horse, and that the research would have flowed more easily without the need to tick boxes or conform to prescribed running orders.

10.1.3) Potential directions and changes for future research

In light of the aforementioned observations regarding research choices and their impact upon the emerging meanings, it may be advantageous for a future study to adopt a purer epistemological stance – such as existential phenomenology without any pragmatic compromise towards post positivism – and for the researcher to undertake only a superficial initial review of the literature, avoid a priori themes and any predetermined lines

of questioning, and to use unstructured questioning. In this research, participants were given information of IM and a range of definitions, to help them decide whether they had sufficient experience of the phenomenon to take part, and to help them to feel surefooted and know what was expected of them. However, a pure existential phenomenological study would probably avoid such actions – participants would first offer their interpretations of IM based upon their own experiences and positionality against the subject matter, and would be shepherded more loosely throughout interviews.

It would be suitable for an existentialist phenomenological inquiry into actors' experiences of IM to adopt a system of qualitative data analysis, which is not restricted by predetermined lists of rules or steps, such as the four stages of Voice Centred Relational Method (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) and, particularly, the hierarchical framework of nodes and sub-nodes inherent in Template Analysis. However, if future research were to be carried out into the applicability of CM theories and relationships into an IM context, then a positivistic, perhaps quantitative approach would appear more suitable. CM literature itself is overwhelmingly quantitative, with the interrelationships between such variables as trust, dependency, relationship asymmetry and power being interrogated through statistical analysis. Whilst this research project has sought to open the door to a broader debate about transposing CM ideas into IM, the exploratory and qualitative approach covered a very broad range of theories, which should perhaps be tackled individually by future researchers.

10.2) Aims, objectives, focus and scope

10.2.1) Fulfilment of the research aims

A detailed reading of extant IM literature reveals little about IM's operational implementation. It is broadly understood as an organisational strategy or philosophy, but

scant consideration is given to its design and enactment, its impact upon individuals non-commercially, the ways in which it is targeted towards audiences and the transferral of meanings. Previous research had said little about individual stakeholders' perceptions of IM. Therefore, the research aims were to address those shortcomings. Additionally, by introducing CM theories, it sought to understand the enactment of IM through dyadic perspectives, as suggested by Yang & Coates (2010).

By giving voice to previously unrepresented stakeholders, the research was intended to make an empirical contribution and, by scrutinising IM through previously unused CM dyadic lenses, a theoretical contribution. It was also intended to provide a methodological contribution by using a purposefully designed form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) inspired by the recent rise of netnography (Kozinets, 2010), democratising the data collection and analysis processes further and addressing researcher-participant power imbalances.

10.2.2) Fulfilment of the research objectives

The research objectives were fulfilled by grounding it in the academic debate on IM, exploring complementary perspectives and paradigms, empowering participants within a democratised research process, encouraging participant reflexivity through methodological advances, and focusing on the noneconomic experiences of individuals rather than just the economic organisational outcomes.

The theoretical development of IM has been sporadic, and rather subdued since Gounaris' (2006; 2008) work on the measurement of IMO, and Grönroos' (2007) Nordic Model of Service Quality. However, this research joins the debate by challenging

assumptions from extant literature. Most notably, it reconsiders the implicit assumption underlying not only IM literature, but also Vasconcelos' (2008) ID concept, that IM is designed to produce universal, inclusive gains within organisations. In doing so, it questions the location of the IM-HRM boundary - thought by Ahmed & Rafiq (2002) as being separated by coercion and the leveraging on contractual, legitimate power - adopted to define the scope of this research. Furthermore, its exploration of IM through the dyadic transactions of its actors responds to a request from Yang & Coates (2010) hitherto unheeded within the debate.

This research is grounded in a complementary paradigm to many within IM, exploring the tacit, informal, unplanned, undocumented and often interpersonal transactions through which IM occurs. These foci indicate a postmodern approach matching the epistemological stance taken towards organisations - that they operate cyclically and iteratively; that much organisational knowledge is informal and tacit; and that we should challenge the assumption that organisations' actions are necessarily societally beneficial. This lens distinguishes the research from most major IM studies, facilitating the uncovering of new insights which challenge the superficial benevolence of participants' employers. This democratises the research, empowering participants not just methodologically, but by letting them approach an established subject without presuppositions from the extant literature being transferred from the researcher to the participant.

In designing and implementing a participant-led, netnography-informed (Kozinets, 2010) member checking technique, the research made the methodological contribution of finding innovative solutions to deliver valid and rigorously attained results. Moreover, by encouraging participant reflexivity, it facilitated exploration of IM from fresh perspectives,

which was invaluable in uncovering stories and meanings relating to their personal experiences.

10.2.3) Revisiting the focus and scope of the research

The intended research scope could be defined as 'IM', which could itself be defined by its boundary with HRM. The delineation employed Ahmed & Rafiq's (2002) statement that IM would not leverage coercion or contractual power to deliver its aims. However, the distinction became blurred as Roger described what may be considered ID and how he believed it had been a coercive force and, indeed, an instrument of HRM.

Additionally, as IM theory has flowed into related fields such as Internal Branding, this broadened the scope, as these subsequent fields draw in concepts from related areas to enrich themselves and become IM-hybrid fields. It was therefore necessary to broaden the concept of IM slightly to include some of these. For example, Wallace & De Chernatony's (2008) paper describing the antecedents, characteristics and consequences of Brand Saboteur behaviours was influential not just in encouraging this research to adopt a critical stance, but also to ascertain how an area of marketing could be abused – the dark side of IM.

Heeding Yang & Coates' (2010) call to view IM through the lens of dyadic interactions helped focus the scope, critiquing and adopting widely known theories from CM literature – especially those appertaining to interorganisational interactions within manufacturer-dealer dyads – and ascertaining how they could inform understanding of IM. To achieve this, and to prevent the research from becoming too diffused, the review of the 'donor' literature was not intended to critique one specific aspect of the CM debate, but to

underpin a cross-pollination of ideas. It was unavoidable that this process depended partially upon subjective decisions from the researcher – personal instincts based upon experience of working in CM dyads, and of IM campaigns - regarding which theories may transfer from one context to another. However, to harness this subjectivity, which could have been compounded by the more structured questions used in chapter 9, a robust member checking and peer debriefing strategy was employed.

Key to this research was its focus on multi-stakeholders – diverse groups with widely differing roles and experiences within IM. Participants represented an equal gender split from a variety of industries, age groups, UK locations, levels of seniority and experiences of IM. They included strategy-makers, planners, disseminators, and recipients of IM (although the idea of senders and receivers itself is unsatisfactory in its implied lack of dialogical, democratised interactivity). Multiple stakeholders provided multiple perspectives and truths, none considered absolute, defining or generalizable in the first instance, but providing deep insights forming the basis for further inquiry. The research explored bottom-up perspectives and the impact of IM on individuals through ‘the doing of IM’, its non-economic characteristics and experiential outcomes at personal and interpersonal levels.

10.3) Quality, rigour and credibility

Notwithstanding the difficulties in pinpointing what constitutes ‘quality’ (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) and ‘trustworthiness’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) in qualitative research, it was important for the research to achieve credibility through transparency (Angrosino, 2007) and the transferability of its findings (Flick, 2009). This was achieved by adopting a research design appropriate to the phenomenon being studied (Horn, 2012), a comprehensive data collection strategy, and a data analysis approach providing

substantiated insights and benefitting from triangulation. Whilst Roger's experiences were more extreme than those of other participants, they were not unique and therefore exploration of them did not constitute a negative case analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

An informal research journal was kept in which advice, realisations, experiences and emotions were recorded, facilitating researcher reflexivity (Doyle, 2012; Basit, 2013) and development of the interview technique throughout the process (Flick, 2009; Silverman, 2013). A small number of qualitative researchers, including academic conference delegates, offered interpretations of parts of the data set, revisiting it with fresh perspectives (Cooper, Brandon & Lindberg, 1998). Whilst longitudinality was restricted by the doctoral time constraints, data was nonetheless collected over eighteen months, the experience and knowledge gained in each interview informing the approach to subsequent ones (Fetterman, 2009). Through member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), participant feedback helped corroborate interpretations and underpin research veracity (Harper & Cole, 2012), and this was enhanced by the new form of member checking employed which reinterpreted autonethnography (Kozinets, 1997; 2010), improving the data collection process, instilling participant reflexivity and ultimately providing triangulation.

To achieve trustworthiness, the research was designed to deliver the four criteria proposed by Guba (1981) – truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality – discussed next.

Truth value - confidence in the truthfulness of findings in the research context and its participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) - was achieved by focusing on what interview participants deemed important, rather than on predetermined ideas. Particularly, by asking

them to read and reflect upon their previous online communications on IM, the task of identifying a priori themes was reallocated from researcher to participant (apart from in the focus group, where specific themes required discussion). Therefore, through naturalistic inquiry (Creswell, 2014), multiple truths and realities (Krefting, 1991; Hatch, 2002) were explored, giving credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants subsequently commented through the member checking process that they recognised and agreed with researcher representations of the data (Sandelowski, 1986), and that the semi-structured interviews had allowed them to steer towards their preferred topics (Angrosino, 2007; Neu, 2013). Moreover, the triangulation gained through peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and the researcher reflexivity achieved through use of a field journal (Silverman, 2013), built confidence in the 'structural coherence' (Krefting, 1991) between data and analysis of the data.

Applicability - the transferability of findings intercontextually and their generalisability to a larger population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Krefting, 1991) – is problematic, and partially undesirable, in qualitative research. Therefore, Guba's (1981) 'fittingness' and 'transferability' were achieved by generating 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) and other dense meanings allowing future researchers to decide upon their suitability for new purposes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data was presented with a discussion of the contexts shaping them, and this was facilitated by the fourth reading of Mauthner & Doucet's (1998) VCRM analysis, in which the researcher explores the underlying contextual story.

Consistency – the likelihood of the findings being repeated if the research were rerun – establishes reliability through replicability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and is again problematic within an interpretivist study. However, in addition to the explanation of context providing applicability, consistency is achieved by explaining the "sources of variability" (Krefting, 1991, p. 216) which constitute the participant's uniqueness and

potential to produce results specific to them. For instance, there was a discussion of Roger's personal circumstances, the recent political and managerial landscape of his industry and employer, which enables future researchers to judge the relevance of his insights to them. A 'stepwise replication technique' (Krefting, 1991) was employed within the peer debriefing strategy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for the interview with Roger, ensuring that fellow researchers' interpretations were sufficiently close to those reached in this study to eliminate undue bias, whilst retaining data 'richness' (Krefting, 1991).

Neutrality – deriving findings from participants' words and experiences rather than outside influences (Guba, 1981) – was sought to eliminate undue bias in the research undertaking. Although objectivity would have deprived the project of the researcher's perspective, the presuppositions were stated from the outset so that readers could consider their impact (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and an audit trail of the research process – including triangulation through member checking and peer debriefing – ensured an appropriate level of qualitative neutrality, or confirmability.

10.4) Summary of the research results

10.4.1) General findings

Many findings indicated that IM is largely undertaken in an undocumented, unformalised and unplanned manner. This is perhaps underemphasised in the literature, which focuses on deliberate strategies and clear processes. The dialogical nature of IM, relatively unexplored elsewhere, permeates the data and findings. It becomes clear that the process of implementing IM and shaping it to the needs of the organisation is an iterative process undertaken collaboratively between two or more stakeholders. As many of the interpersonal transactions are dyadic, plentiful dyadic theories from CM literature were found to be transferable into IM, and these are discussed in more detail in 10.4.3. Less

expectedly, the presence of ID was detected, not solely as an accidental result of managerial shortcomings, but seemingly as a planned approach – although the establishment of organisational intent is problematic. ID is discussed more thoroughly in section 10.4.4.

10.4.2) Findings arising from research questions

Although most research was undertaken through semi-structured interviews in which participants partially dictated the content, there were underlying questions or themes which the research was intended to explore. Putting aside the exploration of specific themes from CM literature discussed elsewhere, these were as follows: who designs and enacts IM? Who does it target, why and how? How does the sender-receiver transaction or transfer happen? What factors influence stakeholder perceptions of IM? How do perceptions of IM vary across stakeholders?

IM was found to be enacted by multiple internal stakeholders. Despite often being designed and formulated strategically by senior managers (e.g. – Roger's senior civil servants, Hamish and his colleagues, Winifred the CEO), much of it was spread around organisations by managers (e.g. – Lizzie) and not just 'aimed' at junior staff (e.g. – Arthur), but engaged Word of Mouth communications to pass IM laterally between staff members (e.g. – in Lizzie's brown bag lunch meetings and through company gossips described by Eddie).

IM was enacted for many reasons. Roger's organisation wished to engender cultural change during a time of restructuring, as did Hamish's public sector organisation and Jessie's university. Bev and her colleagues experienced several rounds of IM as her

organisation merged with, and was taken over by, several other organisations seeking to achieve cultural consistency. Arthur's fast food restaurant organisation was primarily concerned with training staff to deliver uniform customer experiences and embrace brand values. Owen's energy charity used IM to further its organisational objectives, disseminate information, dismantle silos and underpin its core values, whilst Winifred and Lizzie reported that a desire to enable staff self-actualisation and satisfaction drove their IM ethos.

The methods of transmitting IM and the transactions were largely inseparable. In some instances, the way interpersonal transactions were conducted was central to the success of IM, demonstrating its values and influencing each party's perceptions of the process. Stakeholder perceptions of IM seemed influenced by factors such as message consistency and compatibility of staff expectations (Roger), levels of managerial buy-in, visibility and interactivity with staff (Arthur), positionality of IM leaders relative to staff in terms of privilege and perceived empathy (Jessie and Roger), and the willingness of the organisation to persist with one agreed strategy for a sufficient period (Hamish).

Perceptions varied considerably between participants and within stakeholders in their organisations. Whilst some staff seemed predisposed to embrace IM, acceptance was also influenced by how much IM messages seemed aimed at oneself or others (e.g. – fast trackers in Roger's organisation), the apparent commitment demonstrated by the organisation's management (e.g. – Bev), time dedicated to IM activities and their centrality to the organisational ethos (e.g. – compare Owen's implicit acceptance and valuing of IM with Eddie's description of begrudging colleagues barely listening).

10.4.3) The applicability of Channel Management theory to the internal market

Chapter 9 explored the applicability of selected CM theories and concepts to IM, and the implications of the outcomes are potentially far-reaching.

Reasons for satisfaction in IM (section 9.1) differed between junior partners, who sought personal and social gains from IM, and senior partners, who sought avoidance of organisational and economic losses. This suggests that different IM stakeholders should be incentivised and rewarded accordingly to encourage buy-in. However, it is unclear whether seniority is a linear construct or if there is a tipping point between junior and senior at which attitudinal change occurs, which should be understood by employers.

Determinants of satisfaction towards Internal Service Recovery (section 9.2) included senior partner soft skills and junior partner predisposition towards IM, which broadly reflected Solomon et al's (1985) channel-based theory, whilst dyadic role evolution tracked IM process maturation. It would therefore appear that any organisational failure to build change into dyadic IM roles may lead to their eventual obsolescence or inappropriateness within a longer IM campaign.

As much of the relationship structure within internal service encounters (section 9.3) was tacit and informal, an opportunity presents itself for organisations to manage these aspects of IM transmission to underpin the credibility and relationalism of IM campaigns. As roles within IM service encounters evolve to fit organisational conditions (section 9.4), just as roles in CM dyads, the importance is reiterated of organisations adopting roles which are not longitudinally fixed in their characteristics.

In the same way that CM intermediaries are motivated and satisfied by the benefits of being associated with a trading partner (Gassenheimer et al, 1996), this appears to occur in IM (section 9.5), but specifically as a junior partner phenomenon, suggesting that organisations should leverage associated IM benefits (e.g. - the prestige in the job market of having worked for an IM-focused firm) to encourage employee adoption of IM. Furthermore, as key organisational benefits are attained indirectly through employee-centred initiatives such as increased staff retention (section 9.6), this lets organisations communicate further the synergised employer-employee benefits to encourage adoption of an IM philosophy by all internal stakeholders.

Whilst IM should be consensual in approach and - if one is to take Rafiq & Ahmed's (1993) definition of IM, it is impossible for a non-consensual approach to be classed as IM – domain uncertainty may produce conflict within IM dyadic relationships (section 9.7), just as in marketing channels (Gassenheimer et al, 1996). Therefore, an organisation should define roles clearly and perhaps use some overt control. Indeed, despite the relational benefits enjoyed within IM dyads by senior and junior partners (section 9.8), which reflect the phenomenon in marketing channels (Sweeney & Webb, 2007), the need for senior partners to maintain some caution towards their staff may also be well served by differentiated IM roles – perhaps even of a hierarchical nature. This is likely to apply where goal convergence between partners is weaker and more caution seems necessary (section 9.9).

The focus group's suggestion – contrary to Sweeney & Webb's (2007) findings in CMs – that a divergence of organisational and personal characteristics in dyads may benefit IM by humanising or authenticating interpersonal transactions (section 9.10) - suggests that

organisations may wish to leave managers and employees room for individuality, rather than conforming wholesale to their firm's characteristics. Indeed, the individualisation of interpersonal relationships and the efforts underpinning them – the 'idiosyncratic investments' important in the supply chain (Anderson & Weitz, 1992, p.19) – seem pivotal to IM credibility (section 9.11), and organisations should consider how to deliver this whilst not compromising equity of treatment across the workforce.

Fewer influence strategies were observed than may be expected in marketing channels (Frazier & Summers, 1984), their use was less sequential (section 9.12), and the surrendering of control less evident (section 9.13), probably due to the non-coercive premise of IM. Moreover, dependence asymmetry between partners may undermine IM (section 9.14) so organisations may need to mitigate the effects of this, possibly by implementing relationship-building incentives (section 9.15).

As participants considered cooperation between IM dyadic partners an antecedent of trust, and goal congruence central to IM (section 9.16), just as these factors produce relationship longevity in marketing channels (De Hildebrand e Grisi & Puga Ribiero, 2004), it may be worthwhile for organisations to found IM initiatives upon tasks and projects specifically designed to encourage collaboration and demonstrate commonality between senior and junior partner goals. This has particular potential, as participants perceived their adoption of organisational values through IM as enabled by 'acculturation' rather than 'compliance' (section 9.17) – a distinction from CM (Payan & McFarland, 2005) – or the absorption of modelled behaviours.

10.4.4) Unexpected findings: Internal Demarketing

The most unexpected result was the emergence of ID as a phenomenon experienced by several participants, particularly Roger. The initial research design was intended to explore new perspectives of IM, and test the applicability of dyadic CM theories into IM, so the (extremely minimal) extant ID theory had not been influential, and was subsequently analysed after the first wave of data collection and analysis to inform both a reading of the data and the scope of later interviews.

Whilst Vasconcelos (2008) considered ID an unintended consequence of IM enacted by unsuitable managers or within an insufficiently IM-friendly organisational culture, this research suggested that it may be enacted deliberately and strategically. Furthermore, by transferring extant theory on demarketing into an IM context, a taxonomy of ID was proposed, comprising the following: (i) Unintentional ID, as per Vasconcelos' (2008) contextualisation, above; (ii) Ostensible IM, where the organisation and its management create the impression of implementing a well-intentioned IM campaign which nevertheless deliberately reduces affinity between staff and the organisation, having the opposite goals to IM; (iii) Selective IM, in which IM is targeted at specific segments of the workforce deemed most attractive to the organisation, or perhaps most needing of, or receptive to, the benefits of IM; and (iv) Selective ID, in which those staff deemed the least attractive or receptive are targeted for ID approaches which deliberately seek to reduce their affinity to the organisation. Whilst further research is required to explore the phenomena, claim generalisability or establish proof of organisational intent – and such research would be extremely problematic as few managers are likely to admit to ID strategies – these findings are of significant importance in understanding the misuse of IM.

10.5) Findings and Results of the Research

Having discussed the findings, the following section explains their significance and importance in terms of theoretical contribution (section 10.5.1), contribution to the perspectives and foci adopted to understand IM (10.5.2), and methodological contribution (10.5.3).

10.5.1) Theoretical contribution

Further to the emerging meanings discussed earlier in this chapter, this research has found – unintentionally, by exploring previously underrepresented stakeholders – that ID is occurring, and is likely to be deployed deliberately. It has also shown that ID may be taxonomised according to characteristics linked to intent and segmentation. This alone is a major emerging theoretical contribution. Furthermore, several theories from CM literature were explored in the context of IM to check applicability to that context.

10.5.2) Perspective and focus contribution

This research provides multiple perspectives – participants are equally distributed in terms of gender, age, job seniority, IM roles, industries, and experiences of IM. Whilst they are all UK-based, they work in different regions and are of several ethnicities and political mindsets. The perspectives are top-down and bottom-up, employee and organisational, personal and commercial. The perspective of the researcher, influencing the research, may be more critical than that in many studies, especially in questioning the supposed beneficence of IM and societal value of organisations – being broadly postmodern.

However, of equal importance is the research's straddling of several fields of theory – Marketing, Management Studies, Organisational Studies, HRM, Occupational Psychology

and others. Whilst this posed challenges regarding where to draw the research boundaries, it enriches the study, allowing IM to be placed in the contexts of other fields. Indeed, by applying CM theory into the context of IM, the potential of extant theory is revisited and expanded, and it is hoped that by doing so, other researchers explore the applicability of extant theories into new contexts.

By exploring bottom-up multi-stakeholder perspectives, not only are broader insights produced, but individual participants are empowered when before they had little voice, and this is magnified using reflexive data collection and analysis techniques such as VCRM and several forms of member checking, and the importance of this is discussed next.

10.5.3) Methodological contribution

Through the introduction of a new member checking technique, this research makes a methodological contribution. Usually, respondent validation is undertaken either longitudinally or at isolated points within or after the data analysis (Harper & Cole, 2012) and involves retrospective comment from participants (Creswell, 2009). This consensual validation (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998) avoids misrepresentation of participants, harvesting additional layers of data, crystallising and clarifying points made earlier, and ascertaining data adequacy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, it may be argued that the participant may be swayed by the presence and perceived expertise of the researcher or a desire to avoid disagreement, and that participants may moderate or sanitise those emotions or opinions offered in the heat of interview. To overcome this, this research used a form of member checking in which participants reflected upon their previous online and electronic communications on the research subject matter before attending the interviews, making naïve, informal notes about their reflections which they

would not divulge to the researcher, but use to stimulate their thoughts, achieve interview fluency, and help them to steer the interviews. Moreover, these notes would be used after interview transcripts had been analysed to verify the participants' agreement with the analysis and to discourage any 'backing down' or 'playing along'.

The new technique is notable because it reinterprets autonethnography (Kozinets, 1997; 2010), which was undeveloped and itself derived from netnography (Kozinets, 1997; 2010) – the use of online technologies to explore 'online communities' or 'tribes' (Kozinets, 1997), their community based behaviours and the building of self. Whilst this research relocated autonethnography from principal data collection method to secondary data verification technique, it nonetheless helped explore the construction of self, but in a way which gives increased power to the participant. Additionally, they were encouraged to be more reflexive (King & Horrocks, 2010), identify their own a priori themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), gain emancipation from negative experiences and self-discovery of their emotions (Barnes, 2003), and challenge the boundaries of power and assumed expertise between researcher, field and participant, thus driving authenticity (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). The technique was used cautiously – it was possible that participant misinterpretations could occur because of subjectivity or lack of self-awareness, or that they could 'over-think' interview responses due to being prepared. However, the technique was found to generate significant additional data which enhanced and enriched particularly the case study of Roger, and dovetailed smoothly into the use of VCRM (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998), which was also employed to triangulate data (Wiles, Crow & Pain, 2011) in an emancipatory, enfranchising and empowering manner (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

10.6) Applications of the Research

10.6.1) Recommendations to employers and Internal Marketing practitioners

The importance of dyadic factors within IM is clear from this research. Interpersonal interactions within IM appear critical to the success of the strategy. Therefore, organisations should ensure that those managers entrusted with carrying the strategy to the workforce should be equipped with the necessary skills and attributes – including an ability to empathise and communicate at the recipient's level. Some participants also stated that IM within difficult times may be more credible if the person managing it is not perceived as being highly privileged or unable to understand the target audience's circumstances.

By reading the focus group findings which transplant CM theory, practitioners may also appreciate the influence which trust, satisfaction and (inter)dependence might play in the success of their IM, and plan to monitor and manage them. Also, relationalism is seen as a key influence in IM, so they may wish to nurture dyadic relationships in advance of IM strategies being implemented, so that favourable conditions are propagated beforehand.

There is a risk that an organisation may become more aware of the possibility to segment its workforce and use ID due to this research. However, one must hope that most organisations have honourable intentions, and that they could use the findings to construct an early warning system to ensure that ID does not occur unintentionally. As the research explored a relatively bottom-up view of the phenomenon of IM, organisational strategists should have an increased ability to anticipate audience reactions to IM and to empathise with multi-stakeholder concerns.

10.6.2) Recommendations to employees and unions

If one assumes that IM is co-constructed between stakeholders of varying seniority levels, it is important not just for managers to understand their audiences and partners, but also for junior partners to appreciate the aims and difficulties experienced by ‘transmitters’ of IM, so they may attempt to reconcile any differences and work consensually and collaboratively. At times, even Roger expressed sympathy towards his superiors, despite being subjected to difficult treatment, and there appears a genuine desire amongst stakeholder groups to understand each other better, which could help unions foster better working relationships.

There may be a risk of organisations enacting ID to dismiss less desirable staff without severance payments, and it is important that staff and unions alike be alert to this. By providing an early warning system for ID which adds to that of Vasconcelos (2008), and by describing clearly a taxonomy of ID which outlines the characteristics of different categories, unions and staff are better placed to recognise ID earlier and to understand it, although it is outside the scope of this research to suggest solutions.

10.7) Limitations of the Research

Whilst data were collected over the course of eighteen months from a variety of participants, doctoral time constraints meant that limited longitudinality was achievable. Revisiting the field over a longer period, and especially returning to previous participants, may be a worthwhile approach to gauge how the experiences of those engaged in IM evolve over time. Although this was discussed retrospectively in interviews, collecting

fresh data synchronous with the discussed experiences could bring greater vitality and rawness to the data – less rationalised and polished, more authentic.

A highlight of the research was the unanticipated discussion of ID which sprang from Roger's interview. Not only were the findings comprehensive, distinctive and perhaps a little shocking, but contextualised by Roger against a swiftly evolving organisational and political backdrop. Key to the expanded conceptualisation of ID enabled by the findings was the extent to which it could be understood as generated with organisational intent, rather than as a well-meant accident. Roger often indicated that he believed it deliberate and politically motivated – and research into post-2010 changes in UK Civil Service policy seemed to vindicate this opinion – but elsewhere he thought the damage came about unwittingly. A limitation of this research was the lack of opportunity to establish organisational intent, which future researchers, even with a positivistic strategy targeted to this end, may also find elusive. The deliberate lack of quantitative, statistical analysis prevents much correlation and causality from being claimed. Moreover, the qualitative, relativist nature of the research meant that the presuppositions, stated clearly in advance, were never intended to be designed out completely, but that, for the findings to be useful to a broad audience, the researcher would manage them and use several techniques to achieve truth value (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, a lack of total objectivity, though intentional, may be deemed a research limitation by any audience which questions the veracity of knowledge attained by methods which are not positivistic.

Constructive feedback given by academics at the British Academy of Management 2016 Conference in Newcastle University indicated that, by viewing ID (and even IM) from a Marketing academic's perspective, many equally valid and fruitful interpretations were not fully explored. Whilst this was seen partially as an unavoidable limitation, it was perceived more as a rich opportunity to gain not just multi-stakeholder perspectives (as was the case

in the research), but also multi-field academic perspectives. It was noted that the research could be expanded upon by collaborating with researchers of HRM, Social Psychology, Organisational Studies, Employee Relations, and other areas.

10.8) Recommendations for Future Research

A relatively small sample of carefully selected participants was used for this research. Therefore, it would be problematic to claim generalisability of the findings, although the diversity of participants in terms of age, gender, seniority and industry makes them broadly representative of UK white collar workers, at least demographically. To test the applicability of results to a larger population, quantitative, positivistic research may be required. It would be useful to gauge interrelationships between certain variables scientifically. Just as factors such as trust, commitment, (inter)dependence, bargaining and conflict have been quantified and their influences upon each other measured through statistical analysis within a CM and Supply Chain context, so they can be analysed in the internal market, now that this research establishes their presence as phenomena in that environment.

Because IM practitioner roles were found to change as organisational environment and IM programme needs evolve, it would be beneficial to conduct a more longitudinal inquiry into this phenomenon, which was not possible due to doctoral time constraints. For this, a more immersive methodology may be necessary, and perhaps a progression of interviews with key informants. This is potentially fruitful because there may be a lack of planning for this within IM strategies – it may be either implicit or completely unrecognised within the organisation that the design of an IM strategy and its implementation must accommodate such an evolution.

To establish organisational intent is key to the development of ID as a theoretical concept, and doing so is likely to be extremely difficult as it is largely a covert series of actions to which managers and organisations are unlikely to admit. Key informants should be used, and perhaps interviews with those who have left organisations and can blow the whistle on any wrongdoing. However, this introduces uncertainty over levels of participant bias and reliability, and researchers should proceed with caution. As Vasconcelos (2008) described antecedents to the organisationally unintentional form of ID which he proposed, antecedents could also be established to intentional forms of ID, as they are likely to be based much less around managerial incompetence than organisational culture and perhaps factors external to the organisation too.

There is also an opportunity for researchers to build upon the methodological contribution made here, by using the reinterpretation of netnography (Kozinets, 2015) as a participant-led member checking mechanism and aid to participant reflexivity. By applying the technique to new research settings, possibly adapting it and refining it, future studies can benefit from another layer of triangulation reflecting the digital nature of modern life, the online contexts inhabited by people, and the cultural meanings constructed through expressions of self and community online.

Appendix 1 – Researcher reflections on bias in the pilot interview, using questions formulated by Frels & Onwuegbuzie (2012)

- Bias Topic 1) Researcher's interview background and experience;
- Question 1) How could the researcher's training and experience in conducting interviews be characterised?
- Answer 1) As attending seminars on the topic, reading the methodologies of experienced researchers, asking the advice of peers, receiving the guidance of doctoral supervisors, and conducting a small number of interviews in the preparation of conference papers.

- Bias Topic 2) Researcher's perceptions of the participant(s);
- Question 2) Which participant responses helped the most, and how?
- Answer 2) I felt the participant was an excellent interviewee throughout, but the most useful answer for me was when he explained how he felt about 'fast trackers' entering the organisation, and it became clear that the internal brand was constructed around one specific type of employee experience which excluded and alienated much of the workforce in at least certain aspects.

- Bias Topic 3) Perceptions of nonverbal communication;
- Question 3) Was the pacing of the interview an influence on its dynamics, and how?
- Answer 3) Yes, the pacing was relaxed – both the cadence of speech and the tempo of the interview as a whole – and this fostered informality and put both researcher and participant at ease, as was evidenced by body language and tone of voice.

- Bias Topic 4) Interpretations of interview findings;
- Question 4) How did the findings confirm or contradict pre-interview expectations?
- Answer 4) Whilst the ability of the participant to place his experiences in a broader context, and offer politicised explanations, was entirely expected, given that he was known to the researcher, his sympathy and empathy towards his superiors was perhaps surprising, given that their actions are viewed with suspicion. Despite stating that "there's a deep distrust of bosses now" and "they're not managing it", he (and seemingly a large part of the workforce) was able to separate feelings towards those bosses from feelings towards their actions, saying "it creates a lot of sympathy...it's a balancing act for our managers". There also seemed to be a genuine desire for the participant to be fair and balanced in his representation of his superiors, even though their actions may have a negative effect upon him, saying "managers, to be fair, are working to try and rectify this". Therefore the

most surprising interview findings were that managers can simultaneously elicit both distrust and sympathy through their handling of IM.

- Bias Topic 5) Impacts on the researcher;
- Question 5) How, if at all, has the researcher changed as a result of having conducted the interview?
- Answer 5) The success of the pilot interview – its fruitfulness in producing ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973) and the smoothness of the process – has encouraged the researcher to continue with a similar style. However, the desire to allow the participant freedom led to the initial questions being too unstructured and allowed the interview to stray away from the research focus for a short time. Therefore, future interviews may have more structured questions at the beginning to define the research area, before employing more open-ended questions.
- Bias Topic 6) Impacts on the participant;
- Question 6) How, if at all, has gender / race / culture / class / hierarchy / status / age coloured participant comments?
- Answer 6) The participant is a middle-aged white British male, but would identify as being slightly more ‘liberal’ in his attitudes than the general population. His status within the organisational hierarchy appears significant – by occupying the middle ground between “the bosses” and the “quite impoverished [colleagues]”, he is well-placed to speak with balance and to empathise with both sides. Perhaps the most significant factor in colouring his comments is his considerable length of service at the same site. If more polarised views would be beneficial to the research, or opinions relating to specific backgrounds, it could be worthwhile seeking participants who are female, People of Colour, and/or represent extremes in terms of age or rank.
- Bias Topic 7) Ethical or political issues;
- Question 7) Which ethical issues, if any, were encountered in the interview? Were any political issues encountered before, during or after the interview?
- Answer 7) No ethical or political issues were encountered, although it was necessary to remove many identifying words and much context in order to preserve anonymity.
- Bias Topic 8) Unexpected issues or dilemmas;
- Question 8) When did unexpected issues or situations arise? How were they dealt with? What dilemmas were encountered, and how were they handled?
- Answer 8) No such critical incidents, issues or dilemmas occurred.

Appendix 2 - Researcher reflections on authenticity using Frels & Onwuegbuzie's

(2012) subsequent questions

- Authenticity Topic 1) Fairness – ability of the researcher to value and honour the evaluation process;
- Question 1) How was balance exercised in representing the thoughts / perceptions / feelings / concerns / assertions / experiences of participants?
- Answer 1) By asking open-ended questions which did not seek to elicit specific responses, the participant had great freedom to take the conversation in his preferred direction – even if this meant wandering away (for a while) from the research focus. Care was taken into to interrupt him, or to make sudden changes in the direction of conversation. The participant was not simply asked for hard facts, but also his opinions and emotions, and the way in which he had lived through experiences.
- Authenticity Topic 2) Ontological authenticity – the increase in participant awareness throughout the study;
- Question 2) How was the researcher's progressive subjectivity managed, and the process of change throughout the study documented?
- Answer 2) Although this question is being asked of a pilot interview which lasted only 75 minutes, the participant became increasing self-aware throughout the process, especially in synthesising accounts of his experiences within the work place with comments which seemed to betray his underlying beliefs on social justice and politics. I occasionally had to make a conscious effort not to empathise too strongly with the participant (e.g. – by masking my disdain when asking the participant to explain what his organisation meant by team 'cosies').
- Authenticity Topic 3) Educative authenticity – participants' understanding and appreciation of others' diverse value systems;
- Question 3) How did researcher empathy and insights of participants evolve throughout the research process?
- Answer 3) As the interview progressed, I felt increasingly empathetic with the participant and resentful of his organisation, which was clearly being disingenuous in some of its IM and HRM strategies, and seemed to be implementing a Vitality Curve or 'rank and yank' programme.
- Authenticity Topic 4) Catalytic authenticity – constructions or appreciations which drive participant decisions or actions;
- Question 4) How did participants' emerging constructions and appreciations of others' positions result in them making a decision or action?

- Answer 4) I was surprised that the participant, though in an uncomfortable position in the workplace, displayed plenty of sympathy for his bosses and the difficulties they experienced in undertaking actions that were potentially injurious to his career. In the workplace, this has possibly led the participant to be less assertive than ideal. During the interview, it led him to qualify many of his own opinions and contextualise against opposing opinions or mitigating circumstances.
- Authenticity Topic 5) Tactical authenticity – scope of the emerging understanding to empower stakeholders and participants to act on it;
- Question 5) Have participants gained skills in understanding, or in the use of negotiation or power, as a result of the research?
- Answer 5) It is questionable whether the participant can bring about a different outcome to his plight in the workplace as a result of the interview, but by being able to rationalise his emotions more effectively, he should be able to work towards basic coping strategies.

Appendix 3: Researcher reflections on the research choices made and challenges

faced

Whilst the methodology chosen for this research has been balanced to avoid epistemological entrenchment and to provide accessibility and usefulness to a broad range of readers, there are nonetheless limitations, which are considered here along with the advantages. The chief considerations are my insider status and its effect upon data collection and interpretation, and the impact of the research upon participants and researcher.

I entered academia in 2012 after 17 years in industry, including five years in a senior management role. During this time, I had been exposed to a number of organisational IM 'campaigns' (as I considered them, as they often had perceivable beginnings and endings). Some of my experiences were positive, but increasingly I felt IM as repetitive or as a series of hollow gestures often not backed up by behaviours within organisations. I therefore had an interest in finding out more, especially as the literature on IM is often rather utopian and uncritical. I have also worked for organisations which have treated their employees badly and mismanaged them, sometimes seemingly intentionally, and this has perhaps made me more critical in my stance towards organisations than most researchers and employees. For this reason, I needed to ask myself, as I went through the data collection and analysis, whether this was colouring the research too much, and if I needed to take a step back to prioritise the participants, who may have had more positive experiences of IM. I did this within interviews and afterwards.

Towards the end of my time in industry, with five years as a regional manager of a multinational firm, I was tasked with managing IM. Although never explicit in discussions with my superiors, I felt that IM always entailed an 'us and them' relationship comprising a strong and a weak partner. As I was also in charge of a network of franchisees during my time in industry, I took an interest in CM literature upon joining academia, and immediately sensed parallels between the dyadic channel relationships and those within IM – this perception was encouraged by Yang & Coates' (2010) insistence that IM consists of dyadic relationships, or would at least benefit from being scrutinised through dyadic perspectives. It is possible for IM to be part of a triadic relationship or one with more than two or three actors, so I tried not to be limited by the two-party nature of dyadic CM literature. Moreover, I realised that some participants may wish to speak about other parts of the IM phenomenon than those which may be considered dyadic or interpersonal, so I was careful not to overemphasise my interest in dyads when talking with participants.

A key aim of the research was to generate "*thick descriptions*" (Geertz, 1973) which would allow visibility of multi-stakeholder experiences of IM, complementing more top-down extent knowledge. To elicit such descriptions, participants are integral to the creation of insights, as is the researcher. The knowledge created is impacted by several factors, including these: the extent to which the participant understands the research scope, or the manner in which they interpret it; their experience of the phenomenon being discussed; their motivation to be self-revelatory, and the trust which they may place in the researcher, which gives them freedom of expression; the importance which both participant and researcher attach to certain elements of participant experience; the researcher-participant power dynamics and levels of comfort between them. Researcher interpretations of their

own experiences may also be influenced by factors such as their gender, age, level of seniority, self-esteem, and expectations of their organisations.

For this reason, the textual extracts presented are incomplete are dictated by the participant and researcher perspectives (Corlett, 2012), and the interpretations of them are therefore partial, open to different interpretations, dependent upon multiple contexts, and may be deemed 'biased' (notwithstanding the previously discussed efforts to manage, if not eliminate, bias). There is always the possibility that participants have chosen not to mention elements of their experiences which may be considered more pertinent than those presented, or that I have chosen to omit such elements from the analysis, whereas another researcher may have prioritised them. In any case, space necessitates that no more than a tiny fraction of the overall interview transcripts (which totalled approximately 250,000 words) were used. In this respect, my authorial power and area of research interest influenced the choice of data used, although the Member Checking technique countered this slightly by empowering participants in the research process. Interpretations, although not chosen specifically for congruence with my preconceptions, are nonetheless 'situated' (Janesick, 2008), necessitating researcher reflexivity. By using Member Checking, Peer Debriefing, research journals and semi-structured interviews, it was intended to produce a 'crystallisation' (Richardson, 2000) in which multiple perspectives of the research phenomena appear.

The development and choice of an appropriate methodology was needed for the exploration and interpretation of multi-stakeholder perspectives of IM and their experiences of it, and the choices had to fit within a social constructionist epistemological paradigm. It was important that any insights reflected the participants' realities (Schwandt, 2007) in an emic manner, but without absolute subjectivity. Therefore, it was necessary to consider certain research choices legitimised by the thoroughness of the processes I followed and the high degree of reflexivity which preceded the selection of participant comments for analysis (Crotty, 2003).

As discussed at more length in the Methodology chapter, Lincoln & Guba (1985) were central to ensuring trustworthiness and rigour. Whilst it was not intended for the research findings to be generalisable to a larger population, it was anticipated that – because the sampling strategy covered participants from a diverse range of industries, job functions, ages, UK regions, and an equal gender split – the experiences and perspectives described would be likely to occur freely within others, although readers and subsequent researchers are best placed to judge whether this is the case. Whilst I have had significant experiences of IM within industry, and they have influenced the research scope and methodology, I was within the frame of the research and careful to declare any presuppositions, especially as I am largely critical in my stance when analysing organisations. However, whilst not wishing to become detached or aloof as a researcher (Pelias, 2003), which would have been incongruous with my aims and intentions, I wished to stand back to allow participants freedom. For this reason, I decided to avoid writing in the first person, and not to pursue an autoethnographic approach. Whilst the research is intentionally emancipatory, since it empowers participants to explore IM from their personal perspectives as critically as they wish and to learn more about their roles in the process, the collaboration between researcher and participants occurs not in the data themselves, but in the interpretations and usage thereof.

At certain points within the semi-structured interviews, when it aided the fluency of the interviews or put participants at ease, my interview style could become conversational inasmuch as it brought more of my own experiences into the mix (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). This was true of the initial batch of interviews, and more so with the focus group which was conducted in a more post-positivist manner. It benefitted the data collection in the one-to-one interviews by helping me to conduct them without a strict running order of topics, or a rigid structure, which could have shepherded participants away from fruitful lines of exploration (Johnson & Duberley, 2003). Moreover, it helped to position the interviews as intersubjective and relational social constructionist, built at least partially through dialogue rather than entirely as monologue. This was particularly appropriate as IM itself involves the interrelationship of stakeholders, and it was a multi-stakeholder perspective sought in this research.

If I were to undertake the research again, I would perhaps adopt a purer epistemological approach – possibly considering my interpretations legitimate without the need for a structured approach to data analysis like Voice Centred Relational Method (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). A purist may consider my research to be epistemologically pluralist. However, I felt that, as it was aimed at a wide audience – potentially including practitioners – it needed to have elements of post-positivism, such as the use of Member Checking and Peer Debriefing, to increase its credibility to a non-academic readership and to more positivist researchers.

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